WITH THE PILGRIMS TO MECCA

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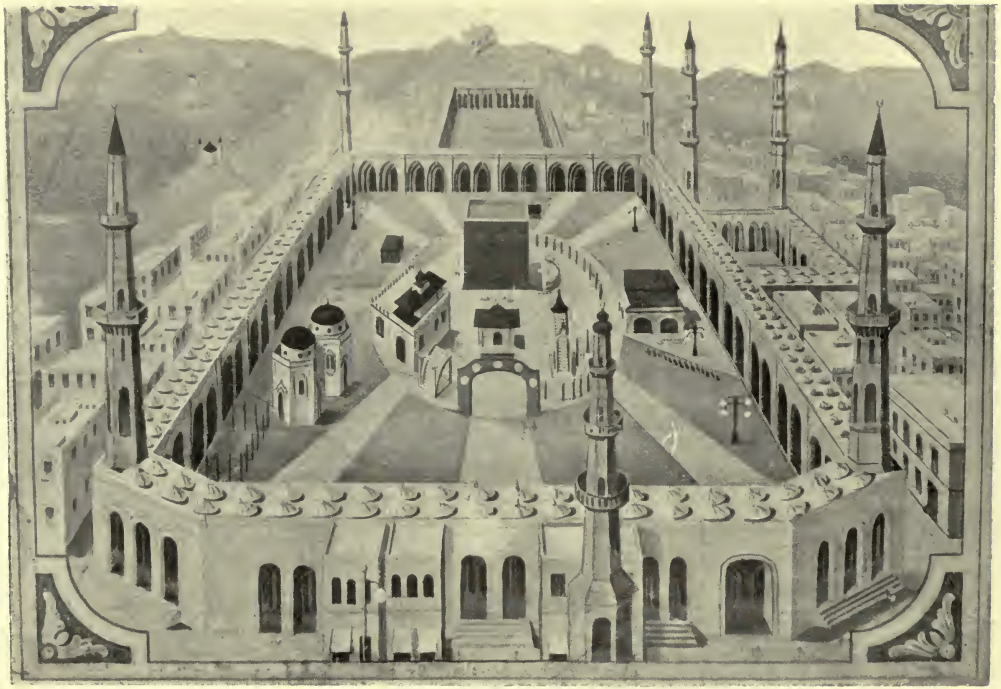

THE HAREM, SHOWING THE KA'BAH, AND THE OTHER SANCTUARIES WITHIN THE HAREM.

(*From an old Indian Illustration.*)

WITH THE PILGRIMS TO MECCA

THE GREAT PILGRIMAGE OF A.H. 1319; A.D. 1902

BY HADJI KHAN, M.R.A.S.
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(*Author of "Persian Children of the Royal Family"*)

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY PROFESSOR A. VAMBÉRY

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

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TO

THE HONOURABLE OLIVER A. BORTHWICK

. . . Oh, never star
Was lost here but it rose afar!
Look East, where whole new thousands are!

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THE Authors take this opportunity of renewing their acknowledgments of all they owe to the Editor of *The Morning Post*, to whose friendly interest and encouragement the success of the serial publication, under the title of the "Great Pilgrimage," was in a considerable measure due. In tendering to him their hearty thanks, they feel it would be scarcely fair to themselves were they to allow the reader to take this, the present fruit of their respective labours, to be a mere republication. It is something far more than that, one-fifth of the book, and that the most interesting part of all, being absolutely new; while the whole of the remainder has been not only carefully revised, but also recast, and, to some extent, rewritten. But the reader owes the new material to Mr. Dunn's kindness in relinquishing his right to it in order that it might appear for the first time in the pages of "With the Pilgrims to Mecca."

28th April 1904.

My own East!
How nearer God we were! He glows above
With scarce an intervention, presses close
And palpitantingly, His soul o'er ours;
We feel Him, nor by painful reason know!
The everlasting minute of creation
Is felt there. Robert Browning.

INTRODUCTION

AMONGST the varied and manifold impressions of my long and intimate connection with the Mohammedan world none is more lively and more interesting than my experiences with the Hajees, the dear, pious and good-natured companions on many of my wanderings in Moslem Asia. We in Europe can hardly have an idea of the zeal and delight which animate the pilgrim to the holy places of Arabia, not only during his sojourn in Mekka and Medina, not only whilst making the Tawaf (procession round the Kaaba), not only during the excursion to the valley of Mina, where the exclamation of "Lebeitk yá Allah" rends the air round the Arafat—but long before he has started on his arduous and formerly very dangerous journey to the birthplace of Islam. The Hadj, being one of the four fundamental commands of Islam, is looked upon by every true believer as a religious duty the fulfilment of which is always before his eyes, and if prevented by want of means or by infirmity he will strive to find a Wekil (representative), whom he provides with necessary funds to undertake the journey and to pray in his name at the Kaaba, and when the Wekil has returned he hands over the Ihram (a shirt-like dress in which the pilgrimage is performed) to his sender who will use it as his shroud, and appear before the Almighty in the garb used on the Hadj. The further the Moslem lives from Arabia the greater be-

comes the passion to visit the holy places of his religion, and if there was a country in which the desire to fulfil this holy command was most fervently cultivated and executed, it was decidedly Central Asia and Eastern Turkestan, where nearly two-thirds of the pilgrims formerly perished, partly in consequence of epidemics and inclemency of weather, partly also at the hands of robbers or through thirst in the desert. And yet these Turk or Tartar Hadjees often disregard all dangers and perils of a long journey, and begin to economise the money necessary for travelling expenses many years before they have set out, for a man destitute of means is not allowed to undertake the Hadj, the same prohibition exists also for a man who is not bodily strong enough, or who has to provide for a family left back at home. It is true, in accordance with the saying "Hem ziaret hem tidjaret" (Pilgrimage and Business together), there are people, who connect trade with religion, but their devotion is often criticised, whereas the pure religious intention meets everywhere with the greatest praise and veneration, and a successfully accomplished visit to the holy places of Arabia makes a Mohammedan respected not only in his community but also in the outlying districts of his country. On his return journey from Mekka and Medina the Hajee gets an official reception all along his route. He is met by young and old, by rich and poor, everybody tries to rub his eyes or his cheeks to the dress of the man, in order to catch an atom of the dust coming from the Kaaba or from the grave of the Prophet, and if the Hajee is the bearer of some *Khaki-Mubarak* (*i.e.*, blessed earth from the grave of Mohammed), or if he is in possession of a small bottle of "Zemzem" (the holy fountain in the precinct of the Kaaba), there is no end and limit to the pressing throng around him. I have seen people kissing the footsteps of such a pilgrim, embracing and petting him,

and what struck me most was the scene where Kirghis or Turkoman nomads cried like children on seeing one of these Hajees, and when they began to quarrel, nay, to fight, for the opportunity to bestow hospitality on a returning Hajee, be he even an Uzbeg or a Tajik, whom they otherwise dislike.

Yes, the Haj is a most wonderful institution in the interest of the strength, unity and spiritual power of Islam; it is a kind of religious Parliament and a gathering place for the followers of the prophet, where the sacred Hermandad is fostered despite all differences of race and colour, and whereas the temple in Jerusalem does often become the cockpit of different Christian sects, and the arena of bloody fights, which would fatally end without the intercession of the Moslem soldiers of the Padishah, we meet with perfect peace and concord in the court of the Kaaba, where the four sects have got their separate places without interfering with each other, and where Hanefites, Shafaites, Malekites and Hanbalites pay simultaneously their veneration to the founder of their religion. Even the Shiite Persian is not molested as long as he does not offend the believers by an ostentatious exhibition of his schismatic views, what he rarely does, for *dissimulation* is not prohibited according to the tenets of the Shiites.

The foregoing remarks about the Haj have been quoted here with the intention to realise the importance of this religious custom of Islam, and particularly to show how necessary it is to know and to appreciate duly the political, social and ethical qualities of this precept ordained by the prophet.

Well, in order to gain full information on this subject, we have been in need of an account of the Haj written by a Mohammedan who is not attracted by curiosity, but by religious piety, who had free access to every place, who is

not hampered by fear of being discovered as a Christian, and who is besides a shrewd observer. These essential qualities I find in Mr. Haji Khan, M.R.A.S., the pilgrim, who calls himself also "Haji Raz" (the mystery Haji). It may be well said that Christian travellers like Burkhard, Burton, Maltzan, and others, have exhausted the subject relating to the holy places of Islam, but a Mohammedan sees more and better than any foreigner, and I do not go too far when I say that Mr. Haji Khan, with his thorough English education, would have been more fitted to describe, unaided, the life and the manners of the Haj, than was his Turkish fellow-believer, Emin Effemdi, author of a Turkish account of the same topic.

I daresay it will be the case with many other subjects relating to the actual and past features of the Eastern life, if natives will be only educated to describe the peculiarities of their own nations and creeds, and for this reason it is desirable that the number of scholars like Mr. Haji Khan should increase, and that this present book, written in collaboration with Mr. Wilfrid Sparroy, should meet with a well-deserved reception.

Great credit is due to Mr. Wilfrid Sparroy, to whose high qualities as a writer, this joint production owes so much. Both Mr. Haji Khan and Mr. Wilfrid Sparroy are to be congratulated on the results of their labours: they have succeeded in bringing the East nearer to the West.

A. VAMBÉRY.

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PART I

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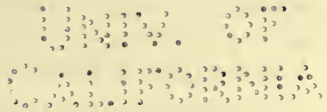
ERRATA

Page 22, line 34,	*For* Jellalu'd-dín's "Al Beidáwí," *read* Al-Beidáwí's commentary.
Page 31, line 10,	*For* "Hájí Ráz," *read* Hadji Khan.
Page 31, line 11,	*For* Chapter v., Part III., *read* Appendix.
Page 32, line 12,	*For* formerly, *read* formally.
Page 57, line 1,	*For* 1320, *read* 1319.
Page 245, line 19,	*For* 1320, *read* 1319.
Page 69, line 7,	*For* uncle, *read* father-in law.
Page 69, lines 29-30,	*For* too rash and too indiscreet, *read* too forfearing and too magnanimous.
Page 72, line 12,	*For* daughter Fatima, *read* sister Zainab.
Page 76, line 13,	*For* daughter Fatima, *read* sister Zainab.
Page 93, line 21,	*For* Yásuf, *read* Yûsuf.
Page 93, lines 22-23,	*For* Al Beyyid, *read* Al Beidáwí.
Page 115, line 1,	*For* Tomb of Abraham, *read* Station of Abraham.
Page 130, line 28,	*For* Tomb of Abraham, *read* Station of Abraham.
Page 117, line 9,	*For* Merú, *read* Merve.
Page 134, line 8,	*For* ordnance, *read* ordinance.
Page 166, line 32,	*For* mosque, *read* temple.
Page 199, line 19,	*For* Tabbál, *read* Tabl.
Page 237, line 12,	*For* Kharnum, *read* Khanum.
Page 237, line 12,	*For* Mrs. Zobeideh, *read* Lady Zobeideh.
Page 251, line 4,	*Omit* the Merciful and Compassionate.
Page 266, line 20,	*For* God is just, *read* God is Great.



WITH THE PILGRIMS TO MECCA

Part I

A PERSIAN PILGRIM IN THE MAKING

I.—Message of the Prophet.

The day before I left England for Persia some seven years ago, I went to see my uncle, the author of the "Siege of Metz." On saying good-bye he made me a present of the Kurán. "Here," said he, "is the thing to be read. It will be the best introduction to the new life awaiting you in the East. If you can lay hold of the spirit of this book you will not be alone out there, but among men and brothers, for the Kurán is a sincere revelation of much that is eternally true." I never saw George Robinson again: in less than a week—before I had left Paris—his spirit had passed to the bourne whence all revelations come, and where truth, in its completeness, will be revealed.

Now, it should be the critic's aim, in dealing with all true books, to place himself on the same plane as the author, and to look in the same direction, fixing the same end. This is more especially true of what his attitude

should be towards a message that has been held sacred by countless millions for more than thirteen hundred years. The merits of the Kurán and the far-reaching reforms of the Prophet of Islám can be appreciated worthily only by such men as have taken the trouble to acquaint themselves with the idolatrous superstitions of the Arabians in the time of Ignorance, and with the empty logical jangling of the rival Syrian Christian sects at the close of the Sixth Century. And the critic having grasped the lifelessness of religious practice before the coming of Muhammad, would be wise to reveal, first of all, what there is of truth, and to spread what light there is in the written word of the great reformer, abandoning to the bigot and the purblind the less fruitful occupation of stirring in the cauldron of religious controversy. To that end, indeed, it were not amiss that he should cultivate his imagination, for the imaginative have turned the corner of their narrower selves, and theirs is an ever-widening vision. To those who, living by the word of Christ, diffuse darkness, Muhammad will ever be either a charlatan or an unscrupulous man of the sword. Well, the Prophet's followers must take heart of grace. History itself as well as the Kurán has proclaimed the charges to be false.

The keynote to Muhammad's character is sincerity. Sincerity rings out clear enough in every word of his book. He was a man in whom the fire-thought of the desert burned so fiercely that he could not help being sincere. He was so truly sincere, indeed, as to be wholly unconscious of his sincerity. Now, of all the stories related of him none affords a more convincing proof of his thorough honesty than the one which shows him to have been, at least once in practice, a backslider from the high ideal of conduct that he preached. This story, from Jallalu'd-dín's "Al Beidáwí," is thus related by Sale:

"A certain blind man named Abdallah Ebn Omm Mactúm came and interrupted Muhammad while he was engaged in earnest discourse with some of the principal Kuraish, of whose conversion he had hopes; but, the Prophet taking no notice of him, the blind man, not knowing that Muhammad was otherwise busied, raised his voice, and said, 'O apostle of God, teach me some part of what God hath taught thee'; but Muhammad, vexed at this interruption, frowned, and turned away from him," for which he was reprehended afterwards by his conscience. This episode was the source of the revelation entitled "He Frowned." "The Prophet frowned, and turned aside," so runs Chapter lxxx. of the Kurán, "because the blind man came unto him; and how dost thou know whether he shall peradventure be cleansed from his sins; or whether he shall be admonished, and the admonition shall profit him? The man who is wealthy thou receivest with respect; but him who cometh unto thee earnestly seeking his salvation, and who fearest God, dost thou neglect. By no means shouldst thou act thus." We are also told that the Prophet, whenever he saw Ebn Omm Mactúm after this, showed him marked respect, saying, "The man is welcome on whose account my Lord hath reprimanded me," and that he made him twice Governor of Medina. And yet many still persist in calling Muhammad a charlatan. Surely a prophet who, in reproving others, spared not himself, has won the right to be respected as an honest man. For my part I believe him to have been one whose word was his bond, and whose hand it had been good to grasp.

As for his having been a mere victorious soldier, he was in the beginning "precisely in a minority of one." Your Napoleon finds in patriotism his most successful recruiting sergeant. But the call of patriotism had

summoned to Muhammad's standard not a single recruit, because he was despised by the patriotic (if the Kuraish, the predominant tribe in Arabia, and the keepers of the Ka'bah, deserved to be so called) and was rejected by them. Assuredly Muhammad drew the sword; he was driven to draw it in the end. But how did he get the sword, and to what purpose did he put it when he had it? Muhammad's sword was forged in the furnace of that passionate, human soul of his, was tempered in the flame of divine compassion, and gave to every Arab an Empire and a creed. Islám was the sword! The blade of steel achieved no miracle, it merely drew blood—sufficiently corrupt. It was the sword of Muhammad's word which freed the Arab heart from its vices and fired it with a wider patriotism and a purer faith. His battle-cry was the declaration of God's unity; his sword was the faith; his battlefield the human heart and soul; and his enemy idolatry and corruption. "Yá Alláh!" and "Yá Muhammad!" carried the Arabian conquest from Mecca to Granada, and from Arabia to Delhi. The conquering hosts fought rather with their hearts and with their souls than with their swords and their strong right hands; inculcating in the conquered no earthly vanities, as do modern Muhammadan rulers, but the principles of liberty, solidarity, unity, equality, and compassion.

Forty thousand Arabs, under their famous leader, Sád Vaghás, having defeated five hundred thousand Persians and overthrown the mighty Persian Empire, in the battle of Khadasieh, on the plain of Nahavend, deeply rooted their faith in the heart of the alien race, and then left her to be ruled by her own people, in accordance with the precepts of the new revelation. Omar, perhaps the greatest Caliph, is said to have lived throughout his life on a loaf of barley bread and a cup of sour milk a day. And Alí'

the Prophet's son-in-law, whom the Persians revere as his true successor, lived for no other purpose than to help the poor and to succour the weak. He was, as Carlyle assures us, a man worthy of Christian knighthood. So also was his son, Huseyn, whose glorious martyrdom has endeared him to the hearts of the Persian people.

In the East men are ruled and guided by religious laws and not by positive ones, so Muhammad's aim was to make the Arabians free and united by lessening the sufferings of the poor and by establishing equality among the people. That these aims and aspirations cannot be consummated through positive laws alone must be abundantly clear to every man in the civilised West who has watched the gradual rise among us of Socialism and the deadly growth of Anarchy. We Western peoples merely pray that God's will may be done on earth as it is in Heaven. Whereas Muhammad, being, as he was, a practical reformer, made it incumbent on his followers to contribute to the consummation of the Divine Law by bestowing on the poor a fair share of the things that they loved.

The very core of the Muhammadan faith lies, as I conceive, in three broad principles. First, in the declaration of God's unity. "Say, God is one God; the eternal God: He begetteth not, neither is He begotten: and there is not one like unto Him." This short chapter, as is well known, is held in particular veneration by the Muhammadans, and declared, by a tradition of the Prophet, to be equal in value to a third part of the whole Kurán. It is said to have been revealed in answer to the Kuraish, who had asked Muhammad concerning the distinguishing attributes of the God he invited them to worship. For Muhammad held that all the prophets from the creation of the world have been Unitarians; that as Moses was a Unitarian so also was Christ; that Christianity, as

practised in Syria, was a break in God's revelation of Himself as One, and that he, Muhammad, had been specially chosen by God to readmonish mankind of this fundamental truth.

As this ground idea satisfies the Oriental's reason, so the second, Islám, that is, resignation from man to God, responds to the inner voice of his soul, and seems to lead his heart warmly to embrace the third principle of the Muhammadan faith, which, in the golden age of the Muhammadan Era, was the means of establishing equality among the people—I mean the principle of charity, of alms-giving, of compassion from man to man. Unswerving obedience to the spirit and the letter of these three laws carried with it the obligation of unswerving loyalty to the Prophet. When we pray, we Christians, we say "Give us this day our daily bread." The Muhammadans, under penalty of everlasting torment, are obliged to sacrifice, to the poor and needy, a due proportion of the things that they love —not merely of their superfluity—with the result that each man among them, by that fact alone, constitutes himself, as it were, a willing instrument of God's will that His Kingdom of Heaven shall reign on earth. Another fact that proves Muhammad to have been something far more than a man of the sword is that to this day Muhammadans hail one another on meeting with the word "Salám" (have peace). Indeed, peace being an essential condition of undertaking the sacramental Pilgrimage to Mecca, it is unlawful to wage war during the three months' journeying of the Muslim lunar year, namely, in Shavvál, Zú-'l-ka'dah, and Zú-'l-hijjah.

"Contribute out of your subsistence towards the defence of the religion of God," says Muhammad, "and throw not yourself with your own hands into perdition [that is, be not accessory to your own destruction by

neglecting your contributions towards the wars against infidels, and thereby suffering them to gather strength], and do good, for God loveth those who do good. Perform the Pilgrimage of Mecca, and the visitation of God; and if ye be besieged send that offering which shall be the easiest, and shave not your heads until your offering reacheth the place of sacrifice. But whoever among you is sick, or is troubled with any distemper of the head, must redeem the shaving of the head by fasting, by alms, or by some offering [either by fasting three days, by feeding six poor people, or by sacrificing a sheep]. But he who findeth not anything to offer shall fast three days in the Pilgrimage, and seven when he be returned: these shall be ten days complete. This is incumbent on him whose family shall not be present at the Holy Temple."

"The Pilgrimage must be performed in the known months (*i.e.*, Shavvál, Zú-'l-ka'dah, and Zú-'l-hijjah); whosoever therefore purposeth to go on Pilgrimage therein, let him not know a woman, nor transgress, nor quarrel in the Pilgrimage. The good which ye do, God knoweth it. Make provision for your journey, but the best provision is piety, and fear me, O ye of understanding. It shall be no crime in you if ye seek an increase from your Lord by trading during the Pilgrimage. And when ye go in procession from Arafat [a mountain near Mecca] remember God near the holy monument, and remember Him for that He hath directed you, though ye were before this of the number of those who go astray. Therefore go in procession from whence the people go in procession, and ask pardon of God, for God is gracious and merciful. And when ye have finished your holy ceremonies, remember God, according as ye remember your fathers, or with a more reverend commemoration. Yea, remember God the appointed number of days [three days after slaying the

sacrifices], but if any haste to depart from the Valley of Mina in two days it shall be no crime in him. And if any tarry longer it shall be no crime in him—in him who feareth God. Therefore, fear God and know that unto Him ye shall be gathered. . . . They who shall disbelieve and obstruct the way of God, and hinder men from visiting the Holy Temple of Mecca, which we have appointed for a place of worship unto all men: the inhabitant thereof and the stranger have an equal right to visit it: and whosoever shall seek impiously to profane it, we will cause him to taste a grievous torment. And proclaim unto the people a solemn Pilgrimage; let them come unto thee on foot, and on every lean camel, arriving from every distant road, that they may be witnesses of the advantages which accrue to them from visiting this holy place, and may commemorate the name of God on the appointed days [namely, the first ten days of Zú-'l-hijjah, or the tenth day of the same month, on which they slay the sacrifices, and the three following days] in gratitude for the brute cattle which he hath bestowed on them. Wherefore eat thereof, and feed the needy and the poor. Afterwards let them put an end to the neglect of their persons [by shaving their heads, and the body from below the neck, and cutting their beards and nails in the valley of Mina, which the pilgrims are not allowed to do from the time they become Muhrims, and have solemnly dedicated themselves to the performance of the Pilgrimage, till they have finished the ceremonies, and slain their victims]; and let them pay their vows [by doing the good works which they have vowed to do in their Pilgrimage], and compass the ancient house [*i.e.*, the Ka'bah, which the Muhammadans pretend was the first edifice built and appointed for the worship of God]. This let them do. And whoever shall regard the sacred ordinances of God: this will be better for him

in the sight of his Lord. All sorts of cattle are allowed you to eat, except what hath been read unto you, in former passages of the Kurán, to be forbidden. But depart from the abomination of idols, and avoid speaking that which is false: being orthodox in respect to God, associating no other god with him; for whosoever associateth any other with God is like that which falleth from heaven, and which the birds snatch away, or the wind bloweth to a far distant place. This is so. . . ."

One of the benefits of this Pilgrimage, and, perhaps, the greatest of all, if we regard the sacrament either from the political and social or from the religious standpoint, was, and is, the gathering together in Mecca of Muhammadans of every race and of every sect. There, and in the city of Medina, they first saw the dawn of their religious faith and their political power; there their hearts were drawn together in unity and strength; and there, in the early days of the Caliphs, they discussed their latest achievements, the glory of their future conquests, and studied the wants and needs of their co-religionists. Within the walls of the Holy of Holies they wept and prayed that God might renew within them a cleaner spirit through faith; and there, too, they strove with all earnestness to raise themselves to the full height of the Prophet's conception of manhood, which encouraged such virtues as hospitality, generosity, compassion, heroism, courage, parental love, filial respect, and passive obedience to the will of God. Thus Mecca, in the days of Pilgrimage, might be looked upon as an immense club or a university where Muhammadans, from every quarter of the globe, meet and discuss their political and social problems, and prostrate themselves in prayer to the one and only Divinity.

Another effect of this Pilgrimage—an effect which has

grown less marked with the increased facility and comfort of travelling—is that it kindled energy and courage in such people as would never have left the safe seclusion of their harems had it not been for the rewards which the undertaking is said to gain for them hereafter. For the Oriental nations, be it remembered, are not as a rule of a roving spirit; they are far more inclined by nature to a life of ease and security than to one of danger and privation. "Travel," says an Arab proverb, "is a portion of hell-fire," and so, perhaps, nothing save the hope of paradise or the dread of perdition would ever have induced the meditative Oriental to brave the trials and the hardships of the long road to Mecca.

In our hearts we believe the proof of the Divine Spirit using any religion is that it does not deteriorate. The chief objection to Welsh Calvinism, which, like Muhammadanism, is based on the theory of Predestination, is that it grows worse. It was once simply and sincerely religious: it is now mainly political spite. Has Muhammadanism deteriorated beyond recognition—say, in the eyes of the student of the Kurán, or does it still hold tight by "the cord of God"? Do the Sunnís hold themselves aloof from the Shi'ahs, or do they dwell together, within the Holy Temple, in brotherly love and concord? Their daily salutation of "Salám," is it sunk to a mere empty form, or is it still the expression, as it once undoubtedly was, of a hearty wish to bring about the Prophet's single aim? And of all the nationalities congregated yearly in the city of concourse—the Arabians, the Persians, the Afghans, the Egyptians, the Muhammadans of India and China—which among them all is the most worthy to be commended for its enlightenment and progress? All these questions, and many more on the social and religious life of the East, will be answered in

the course of the second and third parts of this volume. And in the meanwhile, I cannot do better than gather into focus the preliminary notes of my literary partner, beginning with the customs incidental to the pilgrimage; for the main thing now is to leave nothing unsaid which would enable the reader to enter into the spirit and the form of the sacred journey. And henceforward, though I shall always express myself in my own words, the personal pronoun, whenever used, will apply, throughout this work, to my collaborator, "Hájí Ráz," with the exception of the contents of Chapter v., Part III.

II.—Conditions of Pilgrimage.

That being understood, the conditions must be mentioned which, in theory, though not necessarily in practice, limit the number of Muhammadans that go on the pilgrimage. First, the Muhammadan must be of age—that is, he must have completed his fifteenth year when, according to the Muhammadan Law, a boy becomes a man. Secondly, he must be of a sound constitution in order to endure the fatigue of the journey. Thirdly, he should have no debts whatever, but should be sufficiently well-to-do to defray his own travelling expenses, after having distributed one-fifth of his property among the Seyyids, given one-tenth of the remainder in alms, and made provision during his absence for the support of the family and the servants he leaves behind him. Fourthly, he should support both the mosque in which he prays and the fund of the saint he adores the most by making his religious adviser a present in proportion to his means. Fifthly, he must be either a virtuous or a sincerely penitent man, for he cannot legally

undertake the pilgrimage unless his wealth has been gained in a lawful manner. Strictly speaking, a thief, for example, cannot be a pilgrim, nor can the money earned by accepting bribes be used to cover the expenses of the journey. The best money to use for the purpose is that which has been gained from the produce of the soil, or else that which has been bequeathed by a virtuous father. Sixthly, the Muhammadan who would be a Hájí must start with an absolutely clean conscience: he must look to it that the friends he leaves behind him shall have no just cause to be offended with him. Though he need not heed the slander of the malignant, he must formerly repent of his sins, bidding his friends and acquaintances good-bye with the words, "Halálám kuníd." Seventhly, a woman should be accompanied by one of her Meharem, that is by one of the men who are privileged to see her unveiled—namely, by her father, her husband, her brother, her uncle, her born slave, or her eunuch. In short, the pilgrims should be really good Muslims, adhering firmly to all the laws laid down in the Kurán, and following religiously the special teaching of their chosen directors, whose prescriptive right to regulate the minor details of the rites and observances of the Faith, has resulted in their wielding a tremendous power over their flocks even in political matters.

III.—Forbidden Viands.

From the little that has been said of the influence of the Persian clergy you will understand that the priests require their pilgrims to adhere strictly to the letter of the laws appertaining to the prohibition and recommendation of certain articles of food. They must reckon as prohibited

and, therefore, impure, twelve things, among which may be counted pork, underdone meat, the blood of animals, and wines. Though a digression, it will not be out of place to mention here that the wine, of which Omar Khayyám and the Súfís in general sing, is more likely to be the juice of the grape than the interpretation put on it by such commentators as see in it a symbol of God's love. For the effect produced on the brain by the forbidden drink is in itself something of a mystery, as it were, a divine afflatus, more particularly is it so considered by a people of such a temperate habit as the Persians. Some of the higher classes, no doubt, drink hard, and even drink to get drunk, but upon the whole the Muhammadans, and especially the Persians, are, in comparison with the majority of European peoples, extremely sober, bearing their griefs without seeking the consolation of the bottle.

IV.—The Work of Purification.

Now, purifications must be made either in flowing water, or in about half a ton of stagnant pure water. When the nose bleeds it must be dipped three times, after being well washed. Strange to say, the sweat of the camel —the animal that bears the pilgrim to Mecca—is said to be unclean to the touch and its pollution must, like the handling of dogs, pigs, and rats, be cleansed away by the customary purifications. Ablutions, called *wuzú'h* should precede every prayer that is *farz* or incumbent, and *wuzú'h* consists first in washing the hands three times by pouring water from the right hand over the left hand and rubbing them together, next in washing the face three times with the right hand, then in pouring the water with

the right hand over the left elbow and rubbing down the forearm, and last of all in repeating the process with the left hand over the right forearm. After this *maseh* must be performed by dipping the right hand in water and rubbing it over the front portion of the head, and also by rubbing over the right foot with the wet right hand, and the left foot with the wet left hand. If the hands or the feet be sore or wounded then clay takes the place of water, and this particular kind of purification is called *tyammom*. The devout before reading the Kurán, or before entering the shrine of a saint or the court of a mosque, should perform *wuzú'h* or *tyammom*, and in doing so they should resolve within themselves to recite such and such a prayer. This is called *Niyyat*, or Declaration of Intention.

According to a Shi'ah traditionalist, Imám Huseyn has laid down twelve rules to be observed at meal times. The first four are essential to the salvation of all true Muslims. They should remember to say " Bismillah " before tasting each dish, and refrain from eating of the forbidden viands ; they should also assure themselves that the food laid before them has been bought with money obtained from a legal source, and should end by returning thanks to God. The second four, though not universally obeyed, are admitted by all to be " good form," and consist in washing the hands before meat, in sitting down inclined to the left, in eating with the thumb and the first two fingers of the right hand, which hand must be kept especially clean for the purpose. The last four rules deal with matters of social etiquette. They are kept by most Muhammadans in polite society, and are as follows : One should not stretch across the tablecloth, but should partake only of such dishes as are within one's reach ; one should not stuff the mouth too full, nor forget to masticate the food thoroughly ; and

one should keep the eyes downcast and the tongue as silent as possible.

It is a tradition that the washing of hands before meals will materially help the true Muslim to grow rich, and be the means of delivering him from all diseases. If he rub his eyes immediately after the ablution they will never be sore. The left hand must not be used in eating unless the right be disabled.

All true Muslims when eating are advised to begin with salt and finish with vinegar. If they begin with salt they will escape the contagion of seventy diseases. If they finish with vinegar their worldly prosperity will continue to increase. The host is in etiquette bound to be the first to start eating and the last to leave off. Tooth-picking is considered an act of grace, for Gabriel is reported to have brought a tooth-pick from heaven for the use of the Prophet after every meal. The priests recite certain passages of the Kurán before and after lunch and dinner, and also before drinking water at any hour of the day.

V.—Prayers.

All Muslims must say five prayers every day, and the following six things should be observed before the prayers are acceptable to God: (1) *wuzú'h* or *tyammom*, (2) putting off dirty clothes, (3) covering one's body and head and doffing the shoes, (4) keeping the appointed time, (5) determining the exact position of Mecca, and (6) assuring one's self as to the purity of the place in which the prayers are said. Before beginning one must say within one's self what prayers one is about to recite, and for what purpose one is going to recite them, and at the end

one must raise the hands to Heaven, saying, "May peace be with Muhammad and with his disciples." For prayer was by Muhammad deemed so urgent an act of reverence that he used to call it the pillar of religion and the key of paradise, declaring "that there could be no good in that religion wherein was no prayer." It behoves every pilgrim, therefore, in his sacred habit, to pray at least five times every twenty-four hours; (1) in the morning before sunrise, (2) when noon is past and the sun begins to decline from the meridian, (3) in the afternoon before sunset, (4) in the evening after sunset and before day be shut in, and (5) after the day is shut in and before the first watch of the night. Besides these, there are certain other prayers which, though not expressly enjoined, are commended as a special act of grace, more particularly perhaps to the pilgrims in ihrám. Among these may be mentioned the separate prayers generally said at night (*i.e.*, the namáz-i-tahajjud and the vitr), and the extra prayers not prescribed by law, the naváfil and the namáz-i-mustahabb. The positions of the body are as follows: (1) kiyám, that is, standing erect, with the hands down by the sides; (2) takbírguftán, declaring God's greatness, on raising the hands on either side of the face, with the thumbs under the lobes of the ears, and the fingers extended; (3) rukú, inclining the body from the waist and placing the hands on the knees; (4) kunút, standing with the head inclined forward and the hands on either side of the face; (5) dú zánúnishastán, kneeling, the hands lying flat on the thighs; and (6) sijdah, prostration, in which the forehead must touch the ground, or the lump of unbaked clay that is known by the name of "mohre." A full prayer is made up of five "rakats" or prostrations, during which not a word save the prayer as prescribed should be uttered. Part of the prayer is said aloud and

part in a whispering tone. The greatest care should be taken to pronounce each word with the correct Arabic accent, since ill-pronounced words, unless the result of a natural defect, are said to be unacceptable to the Creator. The pilgrim should say special prayers on Friday, and every time he has recourse to the Kurán before deciding on any course of action whatsoever. A special prayer is said by the devout about one hour after midnight. This is called the midnight prayer, and is, of course, a tedious task. Hence it is sometimes said sarcastically of a man with a loose belief in the Faith: "He says midnight prayers!" The prayers most readily answered are the prayers said in Mecca. Thus when a pilgrim sets out on his journey he is requested by his friends to pray for them at the House of God. The name of the person for whom one prays should be uttered, otherwise the prayer will have no effect. Every pilgrim must take with him a rosary, the square piece of unbaked clay called "mohre," and a copy of the Kurán, for a passage of the Kurán must be read after every prayer.

VI.—Aspects of Social Islám.

It is now time to give the reader, in as terse and as condensed a form as possible, a general idea of the part played by religion in the workaday lives of the children of the Faith, beginning with their toilet, that is, with their dressing and bathing, with the combing of their hair and the cutting of their nails.

A pious Persian Muslim, before wearing any new article of clothing, performs his ablutions and prostrates himself

twice in prayer. A man of a less devout, but a more superstitious, trend of mind contents himself with consulting the *taghvím** or the *estakhhareh*,* muttering to himself, ere he dons the garment, "In the name of God the Merciful and Clement!" His friends on seeing the new apparel cry out, "May it be auspicious!" The rewards of a man who says his prayers before putting on a new suit of clothes will be in proportion to the number of threads in the cloth. Hence it has come to be a practice to preserve the material from the blight of the Evil Eye by besprinkling it with pure water over which a prescribed passage of the Kurán has been read.

It is unlucky for a Muslim to sit down before taking off his shoes. When drawing them on it is equally unlucky for him to stand up. The custom, in the first instance, is to rise, doffing first the left shoe and then the right one. The procedure must be reversed in every particular when putting them on. The universal belief in omens is traditional, and extends, among other things, to precious stones. By far the luckiest of these is the flesh-coloured cornelian, which is a great favourite with the men. It owes its popularity to the fact that the Prophet himself is said to have worn a cornelian ring set in silver on the little finger of his right hand. It grew still more in favour at a later period, because Jafar, the famous Imám, declared that the desires of every man who wore it would be gratified. And thenceforward its property to bless has been regarded as axiomatic by the superstitious to whom I am referring.

The Shiahs have the name of one of the twelve Imáms engraved on the stone; others make use of it as a seal bearing their own names. Hardly less lucky are the turquoise and the ruby, which are believed to have the

* For fuller particulars of the *taghvím* and the *estakhhareh*, see page 289 "Healing by Faith."

COPIES OF THE KURÁN WORN *EN BANDOULIÈRE* BY MUSLIMS WHEN TRAVELLING OR ON PILGRIMAGE.

effect of warding off poverty from those who are fortunate enough to possess them. This is why they are treasured by the fair sex, the ruby being, perhaps, the more dearly loved of the two.

Every bath has generally three courts. On entering each one of these the devout say the prayers prescribed for the occasion, but the generality of Muslims, unless they intend to perform the religious purifications, consider it sufficient to greet the people who are present with the word "Salám!" It is considered inauspicious to brush the teeth in the baths, but certain portions of hair must be removed by a composition of quicklime and arsenic, called nureh, and the nureh, though efficacious enough, no matter when it may be used, is said to add immeasurably to a man's chance of salvation by being laid on either on a Wednesday or on a Friday.

The application of the juice of the marsh-mallow as an emollient for the hair is strongly recommended by the saints. Their object in bequeathing this advice to the consideration of their flock was not to inculcate vanity. They had a higher aim than that. Their desire was to stave off starvation from the fold, for that, in their opinion, would be the result of using the lotion on an ordinary day of the week; while rubbing the head vigorously with the precious juice on the Muslim Sabbath would be certain to preserve the skin from leprosy and the mind from madness. To the use of a decoction of the leaves of the lote-tree a divine relief is attributed, for the mere smell of it on the hair of the most unregenerate has on Satan an effect so disheartening that he will cease from leading them into temptation for no less than seventy days.

The pressure of the grave will be mitigated by a skilful and untiring application of the comb in this life.

The blessing of the comb is said to have been revealed to Imám Jafar. Women are not excluded from the spiritual benefits derived from the comb. But, remember, the hair must not be done in a frivolous, much less in a perfunctory fashion. Far from it. On no account whatever must the hair be neglected, for Satan is attracted by dishevelled locks. They are, as it were, a net in which he catches the human soul. Therefore, since the priests and the merchants of Islám shave their heads in most parts of the Muslim world, special attention should be paid by them to their beards and eyebrows. A pocket-comb made of sandal-wood is often carried by the true Believers, who, it may be hoped, turn it to good account in moments of spiritual unwillingness on the part of the natural man.

A Mullá's beard is an object of veneration to his flock. He may trim it lest it should grow as wild as a Jew's, but he is forbidden by tradition to shave it. Even the scissors must be plied sparingly and to the accompaniment of prayer. Perhaps the orthodox length of this almost divine appendage of the true Muslim is the length of the wearer's hand from the point of the chin downwards. This is known as a ghabzeh or handful. A priest may be allowed to add the length of the first joint of his little finger, otherwise his power to awe might grow lax. The soul is in danger every time he forgets to cut his sharib, that is, the tip of his moustache, which should be reduced to bristles once a week. Once on a time a faithful follower of the Prophet asked one of the Imáms what he should do to increase his livelihood. The Imám answered unhesitatingly: "Cut your nails and your sharib on a Friday as long as you live!"

Again, according to a Shi'ah traditionist, if a Muslim gaze into a looking-glass, before saying his prayers, he will be guilty of worshipping his own likeness, however

unsightly it may appear in his eyes. The hand must be drawn across the forehead, ere the hair or the beard be adjusted, or else the mirror will reflect a mind given over to vanity, which is a grievous, if universal sin. The new moon must be seen "on the face" of a friend, on a copy of the Kurán, or on a turquoise stone. Unless one of these conditions be observed, there is no telling what evil might not happen.

The devout who are most anxious to vindicate tradition perform two prostrations on beholding the new moon, and sacrifice a sheep for the poor as an additional safeguard against her baneful rays. The Evil Eye more often than not has its seat in the socket of an unbeliever. Therefore, the Muslim who, on being brought face to face with a heretic, should not say the prayer by law ordained must look to his charms or suffer the inevitable blight. A cat may look at a king; a king may shoot a ferocious animal; and a thief may run away with the spoil. But a true Believer must guard his faith against aggression every time he sees a thief, a ferocious animal, or a king. For very different reasons, he must recite a prescribed formula of prayer on the passing of a funeral procession, and also on his seeing the first-fruits of the season and its flowers. The dead, it is said, will hear his voice if, on crossing a cemetery, he cry aloud: "O ye people of the grave, may peace be with you, of both sexes of the Faithful!"

As the sense of sight gives rise to devotional exercises, so also does the sense of hearing. The holy Muslim should lend a prayerful ear to the cries of the muezzin during the first two sentences of the summons, and when the call to prayer is over he should rub his eyes with his fingers, in order to produce the signs of weeping—a mark of contrition and of emotional recrudescence in the matter

of piety. The true Believer, whenever he hears the Sureh Sújdeh read in the Kurán, should prostrate himself and repeat the words after the reader. If he hear a Muslim sneeze he should say, "May peace be with thee!" and if the sneeze be repeated, "Mayest thou be cured!" But, if a Kafir sneeze, the response must be expressed in the wish to see him tread "the straight path."

Every child of Islám, before going to bed, should perform his ablutions and say his prayers. If he wish to be delivered from nightmare and all its terrors let him say to Allah: "I take refuge in Thee from the evil of Satan," and if he is afraid of being bitten by a scorpion let him appeal to Noah, saying, "May peace be with thee, O Noah!" One day Eshagh-ben-Ammar asked Imám Jafar how he could protect himself against the attack of that malignant arachnidan. The Imám replied: "Look at the constellation of the Bear; therein you will find a small star, the lowest of all, which the Arabs call Sohail. Fix your eyes in the direction of that star, and say three times, 'May peace be with Muhammad and with his people: O Sohail, protect me from scorpions,' and you will be protected from them." Eshagh-ben-Ammar goes on to relate that he read the formula every evening before going to bed, and that it proved successful; but one evening he forgot to repeat it, and, as a consequence, was bitten by a black scorpion.

Prayers are also said against mosquitoes and other insects. This cleanses the conscience of the irate Muslim, if it fail in preserving his skin. The Eastern peoples in general and the Muhammadans in particular are early risers. Sleep after morning prayers, which are said before sunrise, is sure to cause folly; sleep in the middle of the day is believed to be necessary and suitable to work; while sleep before evening prayers has precisely the same effect

as after the devotions of the early morning. A traditionist says that the prophets slept on their backs, so as to be able to converse with the angels at any hour of the night; that the faithful must sleep on their right sides, and the Kafirs on their left; and that the deves take their rest on their stomachs.

Usury, though interest on money was strictly prohibited by the Prophet, is among the Muslims of the present day a common practice. They evade the letter of the law by putting what the Persians call "a legal cap over the head" of the usurious transaction. The money-lender picks up a handful of barley and says to the borrower, "Give me the rate of interest as the cost of this grain, which I now offer to sell to you at that price;" and the borrower replies that he accepts the bargain. Also, a merchant must know all the laws appertaining to buying and selling. Imám 'Ali is said to have made a daily round of the bazaars of Kufa crying out the while, "O ye merchants and traders, deal honestly and in accordance with the laws of your Prophet. Swear not, neither tell lies, and cheat not your customers. Beware of using false weights, and walk ye in the paths of righteousness."

A high priest in Mecca assured me that to enjoy a derham of interest is as bad as taking the blood of seventy virgins. The admonitions of 'Alí the Just, though sometimes read, are less often followed. On leaving his house a merchant must say "Bismillah," and then blow to his left and his right and also in front of him, so as to clear the way to good business.

The pious recite, on entering the bazaar, a prayer ordained for the occasion. When the bargain is clinched the seller should cry out, "God is great! God is great!" But there should be no dishonest bargaining over the purchasing of these four things: the winding sheets for

the dead, the commodities to be distributed in charity, the expenses on the journey to Mecca, and the price of a slave's ransom. In all these transactions the buyer and seller must act according to the dictates of fair play. The man who buys a slave should lay hold of him by a hair of his head and say the prescribed prayer ; after which, if guided by Imám Jafar, he must change the name of his purchase. Slaves are treated with every consideration, so much so indeed that in the household of Eastern potentates, whose treatment of their dependents is extremely arbitrary, the slaves lord it over the servants.

It is said, in the traditions, that a true Muslim should marry neither for money nor for beauty, but should be guided by the woman's moral worth and spiritual endowments. His choice is referred to the arbitrament of the *estakhhareh.* "A chaste maiden will make a good wife ; for she will be sweet-tempered to her husband, and mild but firm in the treatment of her children." This saying is attributed to the Prophet. "A bad wife, a wicked animal, and a narrow house with unsociable neighbours, those are the possessions which try a man's temper," cried one of the Imáms, himself a saintly man. "The best woman is she who bears children frequently, who is beloved by her relatives, who shows herself obedient to her husband, who pleases him by wearing her best clothes, and who avoids the eyes of men who cannot lawfully see her." These words were uttered by Muhammad, if we are to believe tradition.

The wedding must not take place when the moon is under an eclipse, nor when she is in the sign of Scorpio. The best time is between the 26th and the end of the lunar month. Muhammad recommended festivals to be celebrated on five occasions : on wedding and nuptial days, on the birth of a child, on the circumcision of a child, on

taking up one's abode in a newly-purchased house, and on returning from Mecca. Only persons of unblemished reputation should be invited to the marriage or the nuptial feasts.

To the man who brings him news of the birth of a male child the father should give a present. The nurse should lose no time in singing the first chapter of the prescribed prayer in the baby's right ear, and what is called the standing prayer in its left one, and if the water of the Euphrates be procurable it should be sprinkled on the baby's forehead.

On the seventh day after the child's birth the ceremony of the Aghigheh is performed in Persia. This consists in killing a fatted sheep, in cooking it, and in distributing the flesh among the neighbours or among the poor who come to the door. In memory of the occasion a cornelian engraved with a Kurán text, and sometimes surrounded with precious stones, as in the cover-design to the present volume, is fastened to the baby's arm by means of a silk band, and is worn perhaps to the end of its life. Not a single bone of the Aghigheh sheep should be broken; certain prayers should be read before the sheep is killed; and the parents should not take part in the feast.

The baby is not often weaned until it is two years old, Muhammad believing that the mother's milk is the best and acts beneficially on the child's future character and temperament.

VII.—Story of the Muslim Moons.

The twelve Muhammadan months are lunar, and number twenty-nine and thirty days alternately. Thus the whole year contains only three hundred and fifty-four days; but

eleven times in the course of thirty years an intercalary day is added. Accordingly, thirty-two of our years are, roughly speaking, equal to thirty-three Muhammadan years. The Muhammadan Era dates from the morning after the Hegira, or the flight of the Prophet from Mecca to Medina, that is, on the 16th of July, A.D. 622. Every year begins earlier than the preceding one, so that a month beginning in summer in the present year will, sixteen years hence, fall in winter. The following are the names of the months, which do not correspond in any way with ours: 1, Muharram; 2, Safar; 3, Rabíu-'l-avval; 4, Rabíu-'s-sání or Rabíu-'l-ákhir; 5, Jumádáu-'l-úlá; 6, Jumádáu-'s-sání or Jumádáu-'l-ákhir; 7, Rajab; 8, Sha'bán; 9, Ramazán; 10, Shavvál; 11, Zú-'l-ka'dah, or Zí-ka'd; 12, Zú-'l-hijjah, or Zí-hajj. Many stories of these months were told to me by the priests and the pilgrims whom I met at Mecca, and it is therefore my intention to tell over again the stories of the most cherished months of the Muslim year. These are Rajab, Sha'bán, Ramazán, Shavvál, Zú-'l-ka'dah, Zú-'l-hijjah, and Muharram.

On the Day of Judgment, the Holy Muezzin, sitting on the Throne, will cry out, ere he pass judgment on the Faithful, saying: "O moons of Rajab, Sha'bán, and Ramazán, how stands it with the deeds of this humble slave of ours?" The three moons will then prostrate themselves before the Throne, and answer: "O Lord, we bear witness to the good deeds of this humble slave. When he was with us he kept on loading his caravans with provisions for the next world, beseeching Thee to grant him Thy divine favour, and expressing his perfect contentment with the fate that Thou hadst sent unto him." After them their guardian-angels, meekly kneeling on their knees, will raise their voices in praise of the pious Muslim, crying: "O Lord God Almighty, we also bear witness to

the good deeds of this humble slave of Thine. On earth his eyes, his ears, his nose, his mouth, and his stomach were all obedient both to whatsoever Thou hast forbidden and also to whatsoever Thou hast made lawful. The days he passed in fasting, and the nights in sleepless supplication. Verily he is a good doer!" Then Allah will command his slave to be borne into Paradise on a steed of light, accompanied by angels, and by all the rewards of his piety on camels of light, and there he will be conducted to a palace whose foundation is laid in everlasting felicity, and whose inmates never grow old. The moon of Rajab is the month of Allah. It is said that there is a stream of that name in Paradise, whose water is white, and more wholesome than milk and sweeter than honey. The first to welcome the new arrival will be this stream, which will straightway wend its course round his palace. To Salim, one of his disciples, Muhammad is reported to have said: "If you keep fast for one day during the month of Rajab you will be free from the terror of death, and the agony of death, from the percussion of the grave, and the loneliness thereof. If you keep fast for two days the eight doors of Paradise will be opened unto you."

The authoritative tradition goes that a crier will make himself heard from between the earth and the sky, summoning the pious who observed the prayers and the privations of the moon of Rajab: "Oh, ye Rajabians, come forth and present yourselves before your Creator." Then the Rajabians, whose heads will be crowned with pearls and rubies, and whose faces will be bathed in the universal light, will arise and stand before the Throne. And each one among them will have a thousand angels on his right hand and a thousand on his left, and they will shout with one accord, saying: "O, ye Rajabians, may ye be deserving of all the holy favours ye are about to receive!" And last of all,

Allah, in his mercy, will say to them: "O my male and female slaves, I swear by my own magnanimity, that I will give you lodgings in the most delightful nooks of my Paradise, namely, in the palaces around which flow the most refreshing streams of purest water."

A baby is to the Muslim a symbol of purity: and so a man who worships God in the month of Rajab will become like unto a new-born child, always provided that he repent of the sins which he has committed, and follow the law of the Prophet. Not until then will the pious Rajabian be in a fit state, in his character of new-born babe, to start life afresh. The Muhammadans, in so far as duty and obedience are concerned, put on pretty much the same footing the relation of the slave to his master, of the wife to her husband, of the child to its parent, and of the guest to his host. The parallel between the last-mentioned and the preceding is complete because the guest must acquiesce in his host's will, which is supreme. In the matter of repentance, that of Nessouh is exemplary among the Muhammadans.

Now, this man Nessouh was in his face and his voice so like a woman that his wicked nature persuaded him to wear skirts that he might add to his experience of the opposite sex by mixing freely among its members. Soon, his curiosity growing in ratio with his acquired knowledge, we hear of him as an attendant in the hammam of the royal seraglio, where he might have pursued his studies in peace and in rapture had not one of the Royal Princesses, who had lost a ring, cast suspicion on every servant in turn. The seed of Nessouh's repentance was sown when the decree went out that all the attendants of the baths were to be searched. The fear lest his sex should be discovered yielded so swiftly to repentance for having veiled it, that Almighty Allah despatched an angel from Paradise to discover the missing treasure before the decree took effect; and thenceforward

Nessouh, out of the gratitude of his heart, renounced his studies of human nature in petticoats, and vied with the most rigid disciplinarians in prayer and in fasting. His virtues grew so conspicuous in male attire that his repentance has come to be accepted as worthy of imitation by every true Believer.

According to tradition it was on the first day of God's moon that Noah, having taken his seat in the Ark, commanded all the men and jinns and beasts that were with him to keep fast from sunrise to sunset. On the evening of the same day, when the sun was going down, the Ark, riding over the flood, would have heeled over had not Allah sent seventy thousand of his angels to the rescue. It is interesting to note that the number of all the traditional rewards of virtue, as well as that of such of the heavenly hosts as lend their assistance in cases of distress, is always a multiple of seven. A Meccan priest added the following to my collection of "rewards": God will build seventy thousand cities in Paradise, each city containing seventy thousand mansions, each mansion seventy thousand houris, each houri surrounded by seventy thousand beautiful serving women, for the pilgrim—mark this—who shall say his prayers with the best accent on the Hájj Day. The Mullá in question was himself a perfect Arabic scholar; his enunciation in reciting the forthcoming bliss was faultlessly correct; each syllable seemed to pay his lips the tribute of a kiss for the pleasure it had derived from listening to the mellifluous sound of its predecessors. This learned priest will be in his element on all scores should the Paradise of his invention be materialised.

As Rajab belongs to Allah so Sha'bán is held sacred to the Prophet. For we read in the history of Islám that Muhammad, who entered Medina on the first day of the gracious moon, commanded the muezzins to make it known

to his people that the good actions which they might perform during the month would help both himself and them to gain salvation ; whereas their evil actions would be committed against his apostleship, and would on that account be the more severely punished hereafter.

Once a year, on the approach of Ramazán, the precincts of Paradise, and all its gardens and palaces, are illuminated, festooned, and decorated, and a most tuneful wind, known in Arabic by the name of Meshireh, makes music in the trees. Now, no sooner do the houris hear this sound than they rush out from their seclusion, and cry aloud : "Is there any one to marry us through the desire to perform a good deed towards the creatures of God ?" Then, turning to Rezvan, the guardian of Paradise, "What night is this ?" they ask ; and Rezvan answers, "O ye fair-faced houris, this is the eve of the holy moon of Ramazán. The gates of Paradise have I ordered to be opened unto the fast-keepers of the Faith of the Faithful." Then Allah, addressing the angel who has the charge of Hell, says to him : "O Málik, I bid thee to close thy gates against the fast-keepers of the faith of my Apostle." And next, summoning the Archangel of Revelations, He gives command, saying : "O Gabriel, go forth in the earth and put Satan in chains, and all his followers, that the path of my chosen people may be safe." So, on the first day of Ramazán, Gabriel swoops down on the earth accompanied by hosts of angels. He has six hundred wings, and opens all of them except two. In his hands he bears four green banners, emblems of the Muslim creed. These he plants on the summit of Mount Sinai, and on the Prophet's tomb at Medina, and in the Harem of Mecca. His army of angels bivouacs on the plains round about the Holy City and on the surrounding mountains. On the eve of the day of reward, which is called Ghadre, the angels are

ordered to disperse throughout the Muslim world, and every true Believer seen praying during that night is embraced by one of them, and his prayer meets with an angelic Amen. At the dawn of Ghadre day a heavenly bugle recalls the angels to Mecca. When Gabriel returns to Heaven it is to say to Allah, "My Lord, all the true Believers have I forgiven in Thy name save those who have been constant wine-bibbers, or incurred the displeasure of their parents, or indulged in abusing their fellow Muslims."

The various sects of the Muhammadans disagree a good deal as to the date of Ghadre day. Some say it is on the 19th, some on the 21st, and others on the 23rd of the Muslim Lent; but all agree in believing it to be the day on which the books of deeds, good and evil, are balanced, and on which the angels make known to Muhammad the predestination of his followers for whom he intercedes. All Shi'ahs who would win a reputation for piety must keep Ahia, that is, pass the three nights above-mentioned in fasting and holy devotions—a penance of untold severity in that every day of the month must be similarly spent from sunrise to sundown. Through most ardent prayers on the 21st of Ramazán the devout Mussulman may win the privilege of becoming a Hájí in the following year. The 7th is the anniversary of Muhammad's victory over the Kuraish in the battle of Badre, and is a great day with all Islamites. For the rest, the Arabs follow the example of their Prophet in breaking their fast on dates and water; special angels are appointed to plant heavenly trees, and to build divine palaces in readiness for such of the Muslims as should neither neglect their religious purifications nor forget to behave themselves as "Allah's guests." Many Muslims, unquestionably, adhere strictly to all the rites and observances of the occasion; not a few, on the other hand, though they

may fast during the day, devote the night to feasting. Indeed, in every capital of Islám, in Teheran, in Constantinople, and in Cairo, the darkling hours are given up by certain people to amusements and sometimes to vicious pursuits.

The heavenly hosts under the Archangel Gabriel, with his five hundred and ninety-eight wings wide open, and his green banner flying over the gate of the Ka'bah,—the heavenly hosts, I say, dispersing through the Muslim world on the eve of Ghadre will prevail on the ghosts of the one hundred and twenty-four thousand prophets to kiss the Muslims that are piously engaged at night, delivering them from the danger of drowning, of being buried under ruins, of choking at meal times, and of being killed by wild beasts. For them the grave will have no terror, and on leaving it a substantial cheque on the keeper of Paradise, crossed and made payable to bearer, will be placed in the hands of each one of them.

On the first day of the moon of Shavvál, the fast of Ramazán being over, all true Muslims are supposed to give away in charity a measure of wheat, barley, dates, raisins, or other provisions in common use. The guests who stay over the preceding night are entitled to receive a portion of the alms distributed by the master of the house next morning; and hence only the poor and needy are invited to accept hospitality on the occasion of the Zikat-é-Fetre—that is, the festival of alms-giving. The fulfilment of the law is believed not only to produce an increase of wealth in the forthcoming year, but also to cleanse the body of all impurities. So much for the rewards as a stimulus to honesty. Now for the penalty as a deterrent from greed. In the third Súra of the Kurán it is written: "But let not those who are covetous of what God of His bounty hath granted them imagine that

their avarice is better for them; nay, rather it is worse for them. For that which they have covetously reserved shall be bound as a collar about their necks on the day of the resurrection: and God is well acquainted with what ye do." Shiahs are reluctant to get married in the interval between the first of Shavvál and the tenth of Zú-'l-hijjah, because the Prophet is said to have married Aishah, the enemy of 'Alí, about that time. On the other hand the Sunnis, who reverence that brilliant woman, commemorate her wedding day by solemnising their own during this season, unless they are performing the pilgrimage of Mecca.

The most sacred day of the following month—the moon of Zú-'l-ka'dah—is the twenty-fifth. On that day Adam was created; Abraham, Ishmael, and Jesus were born, and the Shiah Messiah, the concealed Imám, will come again to judge the world. A Muslim, if he keep fast on the twenty-fifth of Zú-'l-ka'dah, will earn the rewards of a man to whom Allah in his mercy should grant the privilege and the power of praying for nine hundred years. On the first of Zú-'l-hijjah, which is the month of pilgrimage, Abraham received from God the title of Al-Khalíl, or the Friend of Allah. It is accounted a good deed to fast from the first to the tenth day of this the last journeying month; it is also wise to do so, for it is not every month in the year that the Mussulman can win, by nine days of fasting, the fruits of a whole life-time of self-denial. Another tradition deserving of mention in connection with this month is that Jesus, in the company of Gabriel, was sent to earth by God with five prayers, which he was commanded to repeat on the first five days of the pilgrims' moon; but the two holiest days of the moon of Zú-'l-hijjah are the ninth and the tenth. On the ninth, after morning prayer, the pilgrims, in olden times, departed from the Valley of Mina, whither

they had come on the previous day, and rushed in a headlong manner to Mount Arafat, where a sermon is preached, and where they performed the devotions entitling them to be called Hájís. But nowadays they pass through Mina to Mount Arafat without stopping on the outward journey; and at sunset, after the sermon is over, they betake themselves to Muzdalifah, an oratory between Arafat and Mina, and there the hours of the night are spent in prayer and in reading the Kurán.

On the tenth, by daybreak, the holy monument, or *al Masher al harám*, is visited, after which the pilgrims hasten back, on the rising of the sun, to the Valley of Mina, where, on the 10th and the two following days, the stoning of the Devil takes place, every pilgrim casting a certain number of stones at three pillars. This rite is as old as Abraham, who, being interrupted by Satan when he was about to sacrifice his son Ishmael, was commanded by God to put the tempter to flight by throwing stones at him. Next, still on the same day, the tenth of Zú-'l-hijjah, and in the same place, the Valley of Mina, the pilgrims slay their victims, and when the sacrifice is over they shave their heads and trim their nails, and then return to Mecca in order to take their leave of the Ka'bah. All these ceremonies will be described in detail in the forthcoming narrative. Meanwhile, by way of further introduction, a few words must be said as to the animals sacrificed. The victims should be camels, kine, sheep, or goats. The camels and kine should be females and the sheep and goats males. In age the camels should be five years and not less; the cows and goats in their second year; and the sheep not younger than six months. All should be without blemish, neither blind nor lame: their ears should not have been cut, nor their horns have been broken. The males should be complete, and all be well fed.

They were woefully lean, however, in the year 1320 of the Flight. The camels are sacrificed while standing, the fore and hind legs being tied together. A single blow is delivered where the head joins the neck, the name of God being uttered the while. The victim must face the Kiblah, and the butcher or the pilgrim, as the case may be, stands on the right of the animal he is going to slay. If the pilgrim be too tender-hearted to deal the blow, he should catch hold of the butcher's wrist, so as to take part in the act of sacrifice. All the other victims—namely, the kine, the sheep, and the goats—are made to lie on their sides facing Mecca, all four legs being securely fastened, then their throats are cut with a sharp knife, without, however, severing the head from the body.

The custom of sacrificing a camel on the tenth day of Zú-'l-hijjah prevails among the Shiahs in most of the towns of Persia and of Central Asia. The ceremony varies with the locality; but the one we witnessed was so picturesque that we cannot refrain from describing it. For the first nine days the camel, richly caparisoned, is led through the streets of the city; half a dozen Dervishes, intoning passages of the Kurán, swing along at the head of the procession; at every house the camel is made to halt, and subscriptions are raised towards its purchase-money and its maintenance. The victim, goaded on from street to street and from square to square, ends at last by collecting alms for its tormentors. On the eve of the Day of Sacrifice the camel is stripped of its gaudy trappings, and its body is, as it were, mapped out into portions with red ink, one portion being allotted to every quarter of the city. The place of sacrifice is usually outside the city walls, and early in the morning each district arms its strongest men to go and claim its share of the carcase. Each group may contain as many as twenty men, bristling from head to foot with

uncouth weapons, and a band of drummers adds to the barbaric display the sounds of discordant music. One man in each group rides on horseback and wears a cashmere shawl; it is he who receives into his hands the sacrificial share of the parish he represents. Prayers are said, and then, at a given signal, the butcher prepares his knife, and the cutters appointed by the respective quarters make ready to hack the victim in pieces. The camel, bare of covering, and marked all over with the red lines, turns its supercilious eyes on the eager cutters, and they, in their turn, watch the butcher. The wretched victim may or may not be conscious of its fate. I believe it to be conscious; but, whether it is or not, there is no sign of terror in its eyes, only the customary look of sly disdain. No sooner does the butcher plunge the knife into the camel's wind-pipe than the cutters vie with one another as to who shall be the first to finish carving the still animate body, each allotted part of which is handed warm and well-nigh throbbing with life, to the horseman of the quarter to which it belongs. He takes it in procession to the house of the magistrate, who distributes it among the poor.

The prayer most acceptable to God is that of Nodbeh, which must be said by the pilgrims on Mount Arafat, with tears pouring from their eyes. The Prophet rose to a noble conception of the next life. He not only believed that the pure-hearted will see God, he also proclaimed that blessing to be the height of heavenly bliss. The Muslim Paradise, therefore, in its material aspect unalloyed, is the invention of the tradition-mongers. According to the orthodox among them, it is situated above the seven heavens, immediately under the Throne of God. Some say that the soil of it consists of the finest wheat flour, others will have it to be of the purest musk, and others again of saffron. Its palaces have

walls of solid gold, its stones are pearls and jacinths, and of its trees, all of which have golden trunks, the most remarkable is the Tree of Happiness, Túba, as they call it. This tree, which stands in the Palace of Muhammad, is laden with fruits of every kind, with grapes and pomegranates, with oranges and dates, and peaches and nectarines, which are of a growth and a flavour unknown to mortals. In response to the desire of the blessed, it will yield, in addition to the luscious fruit, not only birds ready dressed for the table, but also flowing garments of silk and of velvet, and gaily caparisoned steeds to ride on, all of which will burst out from its leaves. There will be no need to reach out the hand to the branches, for the branches will bend down of their own accord to the hand of the person who would gather of their products. So large is the Túba tree that a man "mounted on the fleetest horse would not be able to gallop from one end of its shade to the other in a hundred years." All the rivers of Paradise take their rise from the root of the Tree of Happiness; some of them flow with water, some with milk, some with wine, and others with honey. Their beds are of musk, their sides of saffron, their earth of camphire, and their pebbles are rubies and emeralds. The most noteworthy among them, after the River of Life, is Al-Káwthar. This word, Al-Káwthar, which signifies *abundance*, has come to mean the gift of prophecy, and the water of the river of that name is derived into Muhammad's pond. According to a tradition of the Prophet, this river, wherein his Lord promised him abundance of wisdom, is whiter than milk, cooler than snow, sweeter than honey, and smoother than cream; and those who drink of it shall never be thirsty.

The blessed, having quenched their thirst in Muhammad's pond, are admitted into Paradise, and there they are entertained to dinner by the Supreme Host.

For meat they will have the ox Balám and the fish Nún, and for bread—mark this—God will turn the whole earth into one huge loaf, and hand it to His guests, "holding it like a cake." When the repast is over they will be conducted to the palaces prepared for them, where they will dwell with the houris they have won by their good deeds on earth. They will fare sumptuously through all eternity, and without loss of appetite, eat as much as they will: for all superfluities will be discharged by sweat as fragrant as musk, so that the last morsel of food will be as comforting as the first.

The imagination of the tradition-mongers is not less extravagant when it busies itself with the holy festivals of the faith. The A'yáde-Shadir, perhaps the most important of these feast-days, falls on the eighteenth of Zú-'l-hijjah. Books might be written—nay, tomes innumerable have been filled—to do honour to the attributes of that day. In fact, Oriental exaggeration in general, and the Shiah superstition in particular, reach the climax of fancy in the description of the events that are supposed by the devout Shiah to have happened on the A'yád of Ghadir. For was it not on the eighteenth of Zú-'l-hijjah that Muhammad mounted a camel, and, raising 'Alí in his arms, appointed this chivalrous cousin and son-in-law of his to be his lawful successor? This righteous act on the part of the Prophet is the corner-stone of the Shiah faith, and so it is not unnatural, perhaps, that it should have been made the source of unnumbered traditions. We read, among other inventions, that it was on that day that God chose to humiliate Satan by ordering an angel to rub his nose in the dirt; that the Archangel Gabriel, along with a host of angels, came down from heaven in the evening, bearing a throne of light, which he placed opposite to the Ka'bah, and from which he

preached to his companions a stirring sermon in praise of Islám and its Prophet; that Moses had made his will in favour of Aaron and that Jesus had selected Simon Peter to go and preach to the Jews on the same day in their own lives.

The waters that acknowledged 'Alí to be the Prophet's successor became "sweet" or fresh on the eighteenth of Zú-'l-hijjah. The rest either remained salt or turned brackish. The birds that accepted 'Alí as Muhammad's heir were taught to sing like a nightingale or to talk like a parrot. Those that denied him were stricken deaf and dumb. For the angels who delighted to honour him a sumptuous palace was built with slabs of gold and silver in alternate order. Two hundred thousand domes crowned this edifice, and half of them were made of red rubies, and half of green emeralds. Through the courtyard flowed four rivers: one with water, one with milk, another with honey, and a fourth with wine. Trees of gold, bearing fruits of turquoise, grew along the banks, and on the branches were perched the most marvellous birds. Their bodies were made of pearls, their right wings of rubies, and their left wings of turquoises. All the hosts of heaven gathered together, praising God. The birds dived, singing, into the streams. The angels clapped their hands and shouted. The houris joined in the chorus. Then, with one accord, they all raised their voices in homage of 'Alí and his wife, the Prophet's daughter, Fatima. Lovers should remember to strengthen the bond of affection by exchanging rings. The men should kiss each other frequently whenever and wherever they meet. The servants should kiss their master's hands, and the children those of their parents. If a Muslim smile on his brother-Muslim on this holy a'yád, God will smile on him on the day of the resurrection. If he die, he will receive the rewards of

a martyr of the faith. If he call on a true believer, he will be visited in the grave when he draws his last breath by seventy thousand angels. If he neglect neither the ordained prayer nor the prescribed purification, he will be entitled to rank with the man to whom God has granted the rewards of one hundred thousand pilgrimages to Mecca. And a week later, on the 25th of Zú-'l-hijjah, the angel of revelations brought down from heaven to the Prophet the chapter of the Kurán, entitled Man, and told Muhammad that God congratulated him on the virtues of his family.

VIII.—Persian Súfíism; and Persian Shiahism in Its Relation to the Persian Passion-Drama.

Since the narrative which follows this introduction is written rather from the Persian and Shiah than from the Turkish and Sunni point of view, it is necessary for us to dwell briefly on two more important subjects in connection with Persian thought:—(*a*) on the love of metaphysical speculation which vindicates the claim of Aryan thought to be free, and which has given rise to the doctrines of Súfíism,—our immediate consideration; and (*b*) on the growth of Shiahism, the State religion, and more particularly in its relation to the Passion-Drama, which is the outcome of the Muharram celebrations in honour of Huseyn's martyrdom.

(*a*) *Persian Súfíism.*

Now the Súfís, who are split up into numerous sects, with slightly varying doctrines, speak of themselves as travellers, for they regard life as a journey from their

earthly abode to the spiritual world. The stages between them and their destination are reckoned as seven. Some call them seven regions, and others seven towns. Unless the traveller get rid of his animal passions and pass safely through these seven stages he cannot hope to lose himself in the ocean of Union, nor slake his thirst for immortality in the unexampled wine of Love. The first region before the traveller, the region of Aspiration, can only be traversed on the charger of Patience. Though a thousand temptations beset him on the road he must not lose heart, but must seek to cleanse his mind from all selfish desires. Other-worldliness should alone absorb his thoughts, and to that end the gates of friendship and of enmity should be closed against the people of the world. Only thus can he find his way into the heart of the realm, wherein every traveller is a lover in search of the True Beloved.

One day Majnún, whose love for Laili has inspired many a Persian poet, was playing in a little sand heap when a friend came to him and said—"Why are you wasting your time in an occupation so childish?" "I am seeking Laili in these sands," replied Majnún: whereat his friend, all lost in amazement, cried—"Why, Laili is an angel, so what is the use of seeking her in the common earth?" "I seek her everywhere," said Majnún, bowing his head, "that I may find her somewhere."

And so the traveller, on this stage of his pilgrimage, should regard no earthly abode as too humble a shrine for the spirit of the True Beloved. He should eat, but only to live; he should drink, but only to love; and, though all worldlings should be shunned, he should keep in touch with the hearts of his fellow-travellers lest, peradventure, he might lose a guide to his destination. Now, if he find in this region some sign from the Unsigned, and trace the lost Beloved, he will pass forthwith

into the limitless bourne of Devotion, and see the setting of the sun of Inspiration, and watch in rapture the dawn of Love. At this time the crops of Wisdom are burnt in the fire of Affection, and the traveller loses all consciousness of self; he knows neither knowledge nor ignorance; he recognises neither certainty nor doubt; but, turning his back on the dusk of perplexity, he rides breast forward on the charger of Pain and Endurance, drawing ever nearer to the light of salvation. In this Kingdom of the Soul, he will know nothing but tribulation unless he strive strenuously to escape from himself on the wings of self-renunciation. "Oh, traveller, if thou wouldst gaze on the Joseph face of thy Beloved turn not away from the Egypt of Love! And wouldst thou attain to divine truth, oh learn the way of friendship from the grate, consuming thyself for the sake of the True Beloved! For the love that thou wouldst find demands the sacrifice of self to the end that the heart may be filled with the passion to stand within the Holy of Holies, in which alone the mysteries of the True Beloved can be revealed unto thee. This is so."

And thenceforward the traveller, his heart aglow with the sacred fire of Love, tears aside the curtain of earthly passions, and wins his way into the Kingdom of Knowledge. He has passed by slow degrees from doubt into certainty and from darkness into light. Seeing with clearer eyes he is now quick to discern wisdom in ignorance and in oppression justice. Then, on ascending hopefully the ladder of Wisdom, he rises higher and higher above the ocean of being, and enters into closer communion with the spirit of the one he seeks. The arc of truth becomes an almost perfect round, and he is drawn irresistibly towards the centre, where dwells the object of his quest. After traversing the realm of knowledge, which is the last

A PERSIAN SUFÍ OF THE ORDER OF THE LATE SEPHÍ 'ALÍ SHÁH.

stage of fear, the traveller enters the first City of Union, and drinks deep from the bowl of its spirit: and the next thing he does is to enter the chamber of the True Beloved. As all the shine of the sea and its shade are reflected in the heart of a single pearl, so now the infinite splendour is manifested within the traveller's soul. Looking round him with the eyes of Unity he recognises his true identity in that of his host, and reads the name of the Beloved in his own name. The circle of his aspirations will soon be complete, for the sun of divine grace is seen to rise equally on all creatures; and he is prepared in spirit to advance one step nearer the end. And soon, on the breeze of godly independence, which blows from the spirit's flame and burns the curtain of poverty, the traveller is borne into the City of Freedom. There he will know no sorrow, but will pass through the gates of joy, and, though he be on the earth, will ride the heaven of power, and quench his thirst in the wine of love. The sixth stage on the road to immortality is that of Amazement. Sometimes he will notice perfect poverty in riches, and sometimes perfect wealth in poverty. His surprise will grow at every step. Each second will bring a fresh revelation. Now he will dive into the ocean of divine omniscience, and now be carried to the crest of omnipotence divine.

The traveller passes swiftly from this stage into the region of absolute poverty and nothingness, which is the true forgetfulness of self in the love of the Beloved. He is now as a pearl in the sea of the infinite splendour: poor in the things created, but rich beyond counting in the things that are spiritual and pure. And thus, casting aside the burden of consciousness for ever, he becomes one with the Beloved and enters the Kingdom of Immortality. The renunciation of self, therefore, is the

Alpha and Omega of the Súfí doctrine: the lover, in other words, must turn the Beloved, otherwise he can never hope to gain admittance into the Chamber of Love. "One came to the Beloved's door and knocked. And a voice from within whispered, 'Who is there?' And the lover answered, saying, 'It is I.' Then the voice said, 'There is not room in this house for thee and me,' and the door was not opened unto him. So the lover went back into the desert and fasted and prayed. And at the end of a year he returned once more to the Beloved's door and knocked. And the voice from within said again, 'Who is there?' And this time the lover, having learned the lesson of self-renunciation, answered, 'It is thyself,' and the door was opened unto him."

(*b*) *The Shiah Faith in its Relation to the Persian Passion Play.*

The Shiah faith is as old as 'Alí; for, on the feast of Ghadir, he is said to have been selected by Muhammad as his successor. In the ages immediately succeeding the Prophet, it spread itself East and West. The Muslim colonies, in various parts of the Empire, embraced its political teaching. It took root even in Mecca and Medina; but it was in Persia alone that it grew, in the Ninth Century, to be the State religion, waning and waxing in its hold on the people during the dynastic changes to which the country subsequently submitted itself; until, in the declining years of the Fifteenth Century, under the Safaví Kings, it re-established its grip, this time for good, on the national conscience. The mourning celebration of the month of Muharram, in which the whole country, with the exception of the Sunnis, takes part to this day, was founded in the Tenth Century by

Ahmad Muizz-u'd-Dawlat. In order to appreciate the depth of feeling underlying this yearly commemoration, the reigns of the early Caliphs must be reviewed. For, in the story of the family of the Tent, lies the *raison d'être* of the Muharram celebration.

When Muhammad died he was succeeded by his uncle, Abú Bekr, a man of great prudence and sincere piety. His rule was accepted by all the Prophet's companions, if we except the Hashemites, who, under the leadership of 'Alí, declined at first to take the oath of fidelity. But the death of Fatima, the wife of 'Alí, so subdued the spirit of her husband that he made his peace with the aged Caliph, who died after a reign of two years, bequeathing his sceptre to the iron hand of the incorruptible Omar. In the twelfth year of a reign of unexampled glory Omar was assassinated, and his successor was elected by six of his most trustworthy lieutenants. Othman, the man chosen by them, had been Muhammad's secretary: he was not a successful ruler. His helpless character and resourcelessness of mind succumbed to the burden of his responsibilities; his subjects rose in arms throughout his Empire, and the treachery of one of his secretaries hastened his downfall. The brother of Ayeshah is believed to have led the assassins, and Othman, with the Kurán on his knees, was pierced with a multitude of wounds. He died in the year 655 A.D., in the eleventh year of his reign. The inauguration of 'Alí put an end to the anarchy that ensued; but, with all his bravery and all the brilliancy of his endowments, 'Alí was alike too rash and too indiscreet to cope successfully with the difficulties of his position. He was not so much a politician as a poet turned knight-errant, a religious enthusiast turned soldier. The first Caliph would have secured the allegiance of Telha and Zobeir, two of the most powerful of the

Arabian chieftains, by gifts. Omar, the second Caliph, would have insured his authority and checked their lawlessness by casting them into prison. Whereas 'Alí, from purely chivalrous motives, left them to their own devices without, however, in his contempt for what he had condemned in another as self-seeking generosity, bribing them to keep the peace. And so Telha and Zobeir escaping from Medina, fled, and raised the standard of revolt in Assyria. The Prophet's widow, Ayeshah, the implacable enemy of 'Alí, accompanied them, and was present at the battle in which the Caliph, at the head of twenty-nine thousand men, defeated the enemy, and in which the rebel leaders were slain. This battle was called the Day of the Camel: for, "in the heat of the action, seventy men, who held the bridle of Ayeshah's camel, were successively killed or wounded; and the cage or litter in which she sat was struck with javelins and darts like the quills of a porcupine." Ayeshah was reproached by the victorious 'Alí, and then sent under escort to Medina where she lived to the end of her days at her husband's tomb.

Meanwhile, Moawiyah, the son of Abú Sophian, had assumed the title of Caliph and won the support of the Syrians and the interest of the house of Ommiyah, and against him 'Alí now marched. Mounted on a piebald horse, and wielding his two-edged sword with terrific effect, he literally ploughed his way through the ranks of the Syrians, crying out at every stroke of the blade, "God is victorious." In the course of the night in which the battle raged he was heard to repeat "that tremendous exclamation" four hundred times. Nothing save flight would have saved his enemies, had not the crafty Moawiyah exposed on the foremost lances the sacred books of the Kurán, thus turning the pious zeal of his opponents against them-

selves; and 'Alí, in the face of his followers' awe, was constrained to submit to a humiliating truce. In his grief and anger he retreated to Kufa; his party was dejected; the distant provinces of Persia, of Yemen, and of Egypt acclaimed his stealthy rival; and he himself, in the mosque of his city of refuge, fell a victim to a fanatic's knife.

Moawiyah, after the death of 'Alí, brought about the abdication of the latter's son Hasan, who, retiring without regret from the Palace of Kufá, went to live in a hermit's cell near the tomb of the Prophet, his grandfather. There he was poisoned, and, as many believe, by his wife. But Huseyn, his younger brother, was not set aside so easily. In every way worthy to inherit the regal and sacerdotal office, he added to Hasan's benevolence and piety, no insignificant measure of his father's indomitable spirit, having served with honour against the Christians in the siege of Constantinople. So that, when Moawiyah proclaimed his son Yazid, who was as dissolute as he was weak-minded, to be the Commander of the Faithful and the successor of the Apostle of God, Huseyn, who was living in Medina at the time, scorned to acknowledge the title of the youth, whose vicious habits he despised. One hundred and forty thousand Muslims of Kufá and thereabouts professed their attachment to Huseyn's cause, and a list of these adherents of his was transmitted to Medina. Against the advice of his wisest friends, he resolved to traverse the desert of Arabia, and to appear on the banks of the Euphrates—a river held sacred to this day by every Shiah. He set out with his family, crossed the barren expanse of desert, and approached the confines of Assyria, where he was alarmed by the hostile aspect of the country and "suspected either the ruin or the defection of his party." His fears were well founded. Obeidullah, the Governor of Kufá, had quelled the rising insurrection; and

Huseyn, in the plain of Kerbela, was surrounded by a body of five thousand horse, who cut off his communication with the city and the river. Rather than retreat to a fortress in the desert and confide in the fidelity of the tribe of Tai he proposed to the chief of the enemy the choice of three honourable courses of action—that he should be allowed to return to Medina, or be stationed in a frontier garrison against the Turks, or safely conducted to the presence of Yazid. He was informed that he must surrender unconditionally or accept the consequences of his rebellion. "Do you think to terrify me with death?" he replied, and to his daughter Fatima, who deplored the impending ruin of his house, he said: "Our trust is in God alone. All things, both in heaven and in earth, must perish and return to their Creator. My brother [Hasan], my father ['Alí], my mother [Fatima], were better than I am; and every Mussulman has an example in the Prophet." His little band of followers consisted only of thirty-two horsemen and forty foot soldiers. He begged them to make good their own escape by a hasty flight; but they held firm to their allegiance, refusing to desert him in his straits. In return he prayed that God might accept his death as a propitiation for their sins; they vowed they would not survive him, and the family of the Tent, as Huseyn and his fellow-martyrs are lovingly called by the Shiahs, passed the night in holy devotions.

The last hours of their lives cannot be more tersely told, and therefore more suitably to our purpose, than in the words of Gibbon:

"On the morning of the fatal day, Huseyn mounted on horseback, with his sword in one hand and the Kurán in the other; his generous band of martyrs were secured in their flanks and rear, by the tent-ropes and by a deep trench which they had filled with lighted faggots, according

to the practice of the Arabs. The enemy advanced with reluctance, and one of their chiefs deserted, with thirty followers, to claim the partnership of inevitable death. In a very close onset, or single combat, the despair of the Fatimites was invincible; but the surrounding multitude galled them from a distance with a cloud of arrows, and the horses and men were successively slain: a truce was allowed on both sides for the hour of prayer; and the battle at length expired by the death of the last of the companions of Huseyn. Alone, weary, and wounded, he seated himself at the door of his tent. As he tasted a drop of water he was pierced in the mouth with a dart; and his son and nephew, two beautiful youths, were killed in his arms. He lifted his hands to heaven; they were full of blood, and he uttered a funeral prayer for the living and the dead. In a transport of despair his sister issued from the tent, and adjured the general of the Cufians that he would not suffer Huseyn to be murdered before his eyes; a tear trickled down his venerable beard; and the boldest of his soldiers fell back on every side as the dying hero threw himself among them. The remorseless Shamer, a name detested by the Faithful, reproached their cowardice; and the grandson of Mahomet was slain with three and thirty strokes of lances and swords. After they had trampled on his body, they carried his head to the castle of Kufá, and the inhuman Obeidullah struck him on the mouth with a cane. 'Alas!' exclaimed an aged Mussulman, 'on these lips have I seen the lips of the Prophet of God!' In a distant age and climate the tragic scene of the death of Huseyn will awaken the sympathy of the coldest reader. On the annual festival of his martyrdom, in the devout pilgrimage to his sepulchre, his Persian votaries abandon their souls to the religious frenzy of sorrow and indignation."

The date of Huysen's death was the tenth of Muharram. The month is one of mourning throughout the Shiah world, every man and every woman wearing black, and Passion plays based on the tragedy of the Tent being

performed in all the chief cities and even in the more important villages of Persia, while the day itself is made the occasion of a yearly outburst of grief, of rage, and of fanaticism, which is as unbridled as it is sincere. On this the Day of Cutting, processions bearing banners draped in black pass weeping through the streets; the Muslim Friars, or, to give them their true title, the Seyyid Rúsé Kháns, lead the way, rending their naked breasts with knives or with needles, and swelling the shouts of "Yá-Huseyn! Yá-Hasan!" with the refrains of their wildest hymns. The flow of blood drives the populace beside itself. In every thoroughfare men of the lower classes run to join the ranks of the mourners, laying bare their right shoulders and breasts to the weapons they carry. And soon every ward of every city in the country echoes and re-echoes, not less to the curses showered on the head of Omar, than to the cries in lamentation of 'Alí's assassination, of Hasan's murder, and of Huseyn's martyrdom. The universal mourning animates the collective body of the nation as with one soul. If it is mixed with a mean hatred for a man of unrivalled integrity and force of character, it is still, as the expression of the nation's love for its chosen hero, a sentiment of loyal devotion and enduring compassion. The noise of the grief over Huseyn's remote death may ring discordant, unphilosophic, and almost barbaric, in these days of the lukewarm enthusiasms and uninspiring scepticism which sap the energies of the more cultured of mankind; but it rings all the more moving to those who can hear and understand. For "it is the noise of the mourning of a nation" mighty in its grief, as Lionel Tennyson has it.

So true and so deep is this outburst of sorrow that every Englishman who believes the Persian people to be corrupt should weigh well his evidence before he passes a

sentence so sweeping and so unjust. The nobility of a nation is dependent, not so much on ends which consist in "immediate material possession" of European means and methods of transport, as "on its capability of being stirred by memories," on its faculty to animate an alien creed with the breath of its own spirit, or on the courage of its conscience to remain incorruptible in the day of persecution and death. These tests, though they be of the spirit and as such unworthy of the consideration of a trading nation and a commercial age, would, if applied to Persia, raise that distressful country to the rank of the first eminence. The power of steam, though it rules the waves and devours distance, has its limits as a civilising influence, among mankind. It cannot fill the hungry heart, though it may be the means of overloading the belly; much less, if less may be, can it inspire in the soul by its achievements the passion whereof the religious drama of Persia is the embodiment. The incorruptibility of the Persian's outlook on spiritual truth has been vindicated in the blood of countless martyrs, and out of his susceptibility to be inspired by the heroism of the mighty dead, or, to put the proposition more particularly, out of his unfeigned devotion to the memory of the family of the Tent, has sprung the Shiah Passion-drama, as from the depth of a whole Empire's sorrow. Were it not so, the growth of the Miracle-play, that passionate outcry of the Aryan spirit in the Persian Muslim, would be a miracle indeed.

The truth is, the Shiah religious drama makes a most touching appeal to the best qualities of the heart and the mind. In its pathos, the episode of the Tent recalls the tragedy of Calvary, and the virtues of the members of the House of Hashem might have been modelled on those of the twelve Apostles of Christ. The sublime figure of

Huseyn stands out among them as the redeemer of his people. As the Founder of Christianity was tempted of the devil in the wilderness to forego His lofty mission that He might gain a worldly kingdom, so Huseyn, in the scene on the plain of Kerbela, rejects the assistance offered to him by the King of the Jinns on purpose to atone for the sins of his people by death. On the Cross Christ's heart forsook him—once, and only once. It was when He cried: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" In like manner the heroic Huseyn, within sight of Kufá, having to baffle the attack of Yazíd and his hosts by turning aside from the direct road leading to his city of refuge, and seeing the exceeding anguish of his beloved daughter Fatima, had felt the sting of his own destiny: "Ye crooked conducted spheres," he had cried, "how long will ye tyrannise over us? How long will ye act thus cruelly to the family of God's Prophet?" Then, nerving himself to the trial, he prophesied his death on the morrow, and said, with his customary fortitude, that the sacrifice of himself and his companions was not a cause for grief, since it would work for the salvation of his grandfather's people; and thenceforward his resolution to meet the fate he had chosen for himself never swerved; not even when the very angels of heaven sought to save his life from sheer love of a soul so dauntless and so incorruptible.

The reward of his martyrdom is won in the last scene of all, which represents the resurrection. The Prophet, failing to save his followers from punishment, notwithstanding the united efforts of himself, of 'Alí, and of Hasan, throws away his rod, his cloak, and his turban, in his disappointment. Nor is he in the least pacified until Gabriel makes it clear to him that Huseyn, who "has suffered most," must lend him the assistance he requires. The compassionate heart of the man is wrung, so that when

Huseyn makes his appearance it is to receive from his magnanimous grandsire the key of intercession. The Prophet says to him: "Go thou, and deliver from the flames every one who hath in his lifetime shed a single tear for thee, every one who hath in any way helped thee, every one who hath performed a pilgrimage to thy shrine, or mourned for thee, and every one who hath written tragic verses to thee. Bear each and all with thee to Paradise." And this being done, all the sinners redeemed by their mediator enter into heaven, crying: "God be praised! by Huseyn's grace we are made happy, and by his favour we are delivered from destruction."

One word more. Among the sinners whom Muhammad commanded Huseyn to rescue from hell-fire, as the reader will have read, perhaps with a smile, were those who had written tragic verses in praise of the martyr of the Tent. His smile may, possibly, ring out in a laugh when we inform him that the Seyyid Rúzé Kháns, the Shiah friars, are said to have been the originators of the Passion-drama. The foresight of the authors in thus securing for themselves an entrance into Paradise and for their fellow-writers the yearly prayers of the endless generations of mankind, was it not ingenuously artful?

PART II

Part II

THE STORY OF THE PILGRIMAGE

CHAPTER I

LONDON TO JIDDAH

On bidding good-bye to the mighty capital of the world I reminded her that though her sombre stone mansions and teeming streets—and shall I say her epic atmosphere?—have for me an unspeakable charm, I was glad to be on my way to the city of great concourse, towards which I had so often turned my face in prayer, and in which the hearts of many millions of people are deeply rooted. Indeed, so certain are the majority of finding salvation within her sacred walls that it would be no exaggeration to declare their highest aspiration to be to see Mecca and die. Ah, well, I for one shall pray to see London again, for how could I ever forget the least of her gifts to me? Dear Alma Mater, *au revoir!*

While I was thus meditating the train puffed out of the station, and the shore of the English Channel was reached. The weather was mild, the sky was clear; even the worst sailor might feel sure of having a delightful passage, and

I, praise the Powers, am a good sailor. And so it was: we reached the neighbouring shore without the slightest qualm, and arrived in Paris at six o'clock in the morning. Many people were already on the move—unlike London, where hardly anybody is seen about at that time of the day, except, perhaps, the loitering scum that begins to rise from the excess of the previous night's libations. On the way from the Gare du Nord to the Gare de Lyon I noticed signs of the festivities in connection with the Centenary of Victor Hugo, and I could not help admiring the new statue raised this year to commemorate the strenuous genius of that great man. One short hour in Paris, then our train sped southward in brilliant sunshine, which seemed to draw me nearer to that burning Arabian land whither I was bound.

On my arrival at Marseilles I booked a berth on board the steamer *Rewa*, belonging to the British India Steam Navigation Company, as it proved to be the only one that would enable me to reach Port Said and to proceed thence to Suez by rail in time to catch the connection by boat to Jiddah.

I shall neither tax the reader's patience nor trespass on my space by relating the trivial incidents of a voyage that presented little of interest to a travel-worn mind. It will be enough to say that the wind, which was as fair as one could desire till we reached the Straits of Messina, was bent afterwards on making another and an angrier sea. The discomfort of the passengers, most of whom were Britains bound for India, was betrayed by their seclusion from the open air. The nearer we approached the East, the more kindly grew the elements, until, on the seventh day, about seven o'clock in the morning, Port Said hove in sight. An hour later I had packed my kit and was ready for a hearty landing. Steaming slowly into the canal we

passed the pier, which was still in course of construction, saluted the statue of de Lesseps, and raised a shout of surprise on counting not less than five Russian warships before we had reached our moorings. Those guardians of Russian prestige had come from Chinese waters, had remained five days at Suez, and were now coaling at Port Said, where they had arrived on the previous day. Not one single British man-of-war was to be seen. I had my breakfast at eight, after which I bade farewell to the captain and my travelling companions, going ashore in one of the boats that surrounded our steamer.

Two trains start from Port Said to Suez every day, one in the forenoon and one in the evening. The line as far as Ismailia is a narrow tramway having a gauge of 2ft. 8in.; the cars are consequently both narrow and uncomfortable, and take about three hours to do the journey. On my bidding good-bye to the dragoman I had engaged, he assured me that he was far too devout a Muslim to fleece so pious a pilgrim as myself, and he would not accept a centime more than five francs for the boat, the carriage, and his special services. It was from him that I first heard of the outbreak of cholera in Arabia—a report that was unfortunately confirmed at Suez, whither I journeyed in the discomfort of a dust-storm and a hot easterly wind. We arrived at Ismailia at one o'clock, or thereabouts, having left Port Said at a quarter to ten o'clock. This place, when the canal was being cut, was the headquarters of the workmen; but now it has sunk in importance, many of the buildings having actually fallen in ruins. Some of the managers of the company, however, are still living there, and the best houses in the town are at their disposal. Employment is provided on the canal for some hundred and twenty pilots, most of whom are Greeks and Frenchmen, though a few Englishmen have been recently added

to the staff. The railway from Cairo to Suez, which belongs to the Egyptian Government, passes through Ismailia and picks up the passengers for Suez who have travelled so far by the Canal Company's toy line. Henceforward the journey was made in comfort, for the line, though a single one, is a standard British gauge and the train provided with an excellent waggon-restaurant. Nearly all the passengers on board were Arabs and low-class Europeans in the third-class compartments. We stopped at three stations on the way, and every time it happened we were greeted by a weird chorus of Arab song, of which the burden was the "Wondrous names of God and the virtues of His Prophet." I was somewhat amused to hear the words, "Not I, by God!" in reply to my inquiry as to whether or not a certain Arab would be good enough to fetch a bottle of soda water for me. For I, being unused to the climate, had suffered tortures from thirst in the scorching heat and driving dust-clouds, the intervals between the stages being extremely long and tedious—in fact, it took the train seven hours and a quarter to cover the hundred miles that separate Port Said from Suez. Nor was the prospect of a sort to slake the thirst of the weary pilgrim. All along the line hugs the right bank of the canal, and nothing is to be seen except the soft white sand of the glowing desert, unless it be an occasional patch of green grass or a cluster of date trees, irrigated by the fresh-water canal newly cut in order to conduct the much-needed water from a spot near Cairo to Port Said and Suez, the latter a place which stands in sore want of the cleansing and refreshing element.

On my arrival at the station a dragoman, one of the plagues of Egypt, joined himself to my suite, informing me with glib mendacity that he carried both Arabia and the Land of the Pyramids in his pocket, whereas, as a matter of fact, he had not once left his native town. However, as I

A PILGRIM "AT SEA"—SUEZ RAILWAY STATION.

A GROUP OF MIXED PILGRIMS.

could not shake the fellow off, I made the best of a bad bargain by taking him out shopping with me. First, I bought a deep crimson fez with a long black silk tassel and a straw lining. Though it looked both cool and fanciful, and was therefore pleasing to my Oriental eye, I am not certain that a turban would not have been more in keeping with the complete Arab suit which I subsequently purchased. This consisted of a thin linen shirt, a pair of trousers, and two long and graceful robes. The shirt was worn as long as a night-shirt, it had no collar, and the roomy sleeves were left open at the wrists. The trousers were more interesting, and of a curious shape and an odd material, being made of thin white calico, and so cut that whereas an elephant's thigh could scarcely fill the ample width of the uppermost part, one had the greatest difficulty in slipping the feet through the lower ends which clung tightly round the ankles. As for the two robes, which were long enough to cover the nether garments, the inner one was made of the finest silk, striped in successive colours of red, yellow, and green, and was left entirely open in front, but the left breast overlapped the right, to which it was buttoned from the armpits downwards. The outer habit of a blueish colour served as a cloak to the inner one, was made of the same material, and cut in precisely the same way. No socks were worn, and the shoes were not unlike ordinary slippers, with this exception, that they were turned up at the toes.

On donning this picturesque attire I returned to the Hôtel d'Orient by way of the narrow and filthy bazaars, where my attention was attracted by a band of dancers who were drawing together a crowd of sightseers of every nationality. While one man was cutting his capers in the skin of a Polar bear, a second, tambourine in hand, powdered his face to imitate a European, while a third,

got up in guise of a Negro, played with a lively monkey in chains, and three dancing girls with huge artificial moles on their faces completed the company. All these, including the monkey, pranced up and down to the tune vociferated by the women and accompanied on the tambourine by the man with the white face, repeating at intervals the shrill cry of "Hullá-hee-há-há."

As I sat within the courtyard of the Hotel, listening to the voice of the Greek prima donna who sang nightly to the assembled guests, I could not refrain from smiling within myself at the transformation in my appearance and demeanour which recalled to my memory a line of Obaid Zakani's satire of "The Mouse and the Cat," which runs: "Be of good cheer, comrades, the cat has become pious." These glad tidings were spread abroad by a little mouse that, having hidden itself under the altar of a mosque at Kirmán, overheard the cat reading aloud the passage of repentance, meekly kneeling on its knees. Unfortunately the cat, the symbol of vicious cunning, broke its vows a little time after, and I wondered how far and how long I should succeed in keeping mine.

Next morning I came across a blind Arabian priest patiently waiting on the landing-stage for the departure of the steamer, and in the evening he was still in the self-same spot, kneeling on his prayer-rug and singing aloud the verses of the Kurán in a deep original Arab melody, rosary in hand. His young son was kneeling by his side, listening with downcast eyes to the never-ceasing chants of his father, who knew by heart every word of the sacred book, to say nothing of the saddening elegies of the Arabian traditionists. Like most of the singers of the East, who pour out their rhapsodies all day long in an ever-flowing torrent of melody, he was extremely monotonous, and so I sought to stem the current of his

song by entering into conversation with him. On hearing from me that he would be obliged to descend into the hell of the Turkish quarantine and to remain there five days before he could hope to ascend into the pilgrim's paradise of Mecca, a look of keen distress swept like a cloud over his enraptured countenance. Rising slowly to his feet, he raised his sightless eyes, saying: "God, if it please Him, will provide me with a swift means of transport to His city. We shall meet again." So confident was his tone that my own misgivings yielded to the hope that I should yet overcome the difficulty of the quarantine. And soon after I was informed that all the first-class passengers on board the last pilgrim boat would be allowed to proceed to their destination without let or hindrance, but the unfortunate deck passengers would have to conform to the regulations. Never was the privilege of wealth and the curse of poverty brought home to the hearts of the weary in a more convincing fashion. The next best thing to being wealthy, I told myself, is to have the prerogatives of wealth thrust upon one.

Having had my passport *viséd*, I booked a berth and went on board the Khedivieh steamer, which completed the distance between Suez and Jiddah—some six hundred and forty-five nautical miles—in about eighty hours. At ordinary times these steamers are simply employed on the mail service, one of them leaving Suez for Jiddah every week—generally on Thursday—and another leaving Jiddah for Suez on the same day. Though they practically belong to a British syndicate, they go under the name of Khedivieh steamers. The captain and the chief officers are English, whereas the crew are Egyptians and Lascars. During the pilgrimage steamers run frequently between the two ports, and in the year 1902 not less than two hundred thousand pilgrims, I was told, had landed at Jiddah,

the majority of whom embarked at Suez. Among these numbers must be reckoned the eighty thousand Russian subjects from the Caucasus and Central Asia, who, for the first time since they came under the Russian rule, had been granted the privilege of undertaking the ancient pilgrimage. Rumour credited them with being the main cause of the cholera that year. If only the half of what I heard about them were true their pollution would still beggar description.

The cruise in the Red Sea is not so interesting as that in the Mediterranean. Save an occasional ragged rock rising from the yellow waters, or a flight of white birds over the steamer, nothing was to be seen from hour to hour.

When we sighted the port of Jiddah, which I shall describe by-and-by, we were told to put on our ihrám, or sacred habit, before entering the holy territory on our way to Mecca. As a preliminary, I at once removed my Arabian costume, washed my hands, up to the elbow, and my feet, up to the knees; I afterwards shaved the upper lip, leaving the fresh-grown, unsightly beard to its own fate. Then, having performed the prescribed ablution of the head, I closed my eyes and expressed, with the tongue of my heart, the earnest desire to cast off the garb of unrighteousness and pride and to put on the winding-sheet of humility and of passive obedience to God's will. Last of all, that I might be worthy to visit His house, I prostrated myself on the prayer-rug and said aloud the following formula of devotion: "O Almighty God, Thou art without a mate; I praise Thy sovereign grace with all my heart; Thou art pure and everlasting;" then I repeated three times: "O Lord, Thou art without a mate," adding, "I praise, O Lord, Thy apostle Muhammad and his disciples and his family; in like manner, I also praise our father

PREPARING TO EMBARK AT SUEZ.

Abraham and his house." The next thing I said was: "Send down upon me, O Lord, the healthful spirit of Thy satisfaction; open unto me, I beseech Thee, the gates of Paradise, and shelter me from the fire of Hell." And this petition I also repeated three times. I was then ready to don the sacred habit.

Now, my ihrám, which I had bought at Suez, consisted of two thin woollen wrappers and a pair of sandals. One wrapper was tied about the middle and allowed to fall all round to the ankles, while the other was thrown over the shoulders, leaving my head and the forearms bare. Both wrappers were spotlessly white, and had neither seam nor hem. The sandal was a kind of shoe, consisting of a sole fastened to the foot by means of a tie which passed between the large toe and the first toe of the foot; it left uncovered both the instep and the heel. This sacred habit was worn by all pilgrims during the four days preceding the Hájj Day. While they have it on they must neither hunt nor fowl, though they are allowed to fish—a doubtful privilege in a dry land. This precept, according to Ahmad Ebn Yásuf, is so strictly observed that nothing will induce pilgrims to kill so much as a flea. We are told by Al Beyyid, however, that there are some noxious animals that they have permission to kill during the pilgrimage, such animals, for instance, as kites, ravens, scorpions, mice, and dogs given to bite. Pilgrims must keep a constant watch over their words and their actions so long as they wear the sacred habit. Not a single abusive word must be uttered; all obscene discourse and all converse with women must be avoided; and not a single woman's face must be seen, save that of a wife, a sister, or a cousin-german, *i.e.*, a sister's or a brother's daughter. The men, as I have said, must now doff their sewn clothes and must keep both their faces and their heads uncovered; but the

woman must be, as it were, hermetically sealed in their stitched cloaks and veils. The only part of their bodies that they have the right to expose, if they like, is the palms of their hands. For the rest, they must not travel alone, but must be accompanied by a man who may lawfully see them unveiled.

Poor pilgrims! They suffered from right and left. First came the blood-suckers' passport picnic. Here the pilgrim was plagued to death with questions that the most cursory perusal of his safe-conduct had rendered unnecessary. "Where do you come from? When did you leave? How did you get here? What are your intentions? Why this? How that? When the other?" The poorer pilgrims complained that they were positively fleeced on the most frivolous pretexts. "Your passport is not properly written; you must pay forty-eight piastres," and so on.

Then the customs' authorities emerged. "Will you walk into my parlour?" these mosquitoes said to the pilgrims. To the imaginative mind the buzzing which filled the room spelt the word *bakhshish*. Woe betide the pilgrim who did not so interpret the sound! All these officials, as a Persian would say, had arms longer than their legs—in other words, they reached out an itching palm to every pilgrim, and, casting an appealing smile on him, seemed as though they would ask him to tickle it with the counter-irritant of a "tip." They opened my kit-bags and turned everything topsy-turvy before I had time to bridle their official zeal in the customary way. Among the contents were an English newspaper and a novel, and these were promptly confiscated for no other reason than that I had read them both. I cannot say that I made them a present of my purse by way of pouring coals of fire on their heads. It was otherwise in my case. I tied

my purse-strings a little tighter, and responded to their *bakhshísh*-coveting smiles with a smile equally *bakhshísh*-coveting. It is wise, when you know the ropes, to husband your resources till you reach the interior, for there your comfort in travelling will depend on your having a purse well lined. By following this rule, I was not so ill-prepared as I might otherwise have been to meet the claims on my charity of the professional beggars who waylaid my every step in the quaint old city of Jiddah.

Such a scene! Crowds of Arabs were lying on the filthy ground, which, despite the heat, seemed strangely damp. Some were praying, some were snoring, others were smoking, many were wrestling in the mud, but by far the greater number of them merely dreamed away the passing hours, too idle even to open their eyes. You might stay from sunrise to sunset by the side of the more meditative among them without their showing the least signs of life. How differently constituted are these loafers from the free-born Arabs of the desert! The women held themselves somewhat aloof from the men, and sat smoking their pipes, or chatting like magpies, in groups of three or four. The sight of a new face seemed to have lost its attraction for them, or perhaps they had grown weary of criticising the gait and the appearance of the incoming pilgrims. Having now seen a good many of them, however, as it were by stealth, I think I may say with confidence that among the Arabs of Hejaz the men are far better-looking than the women. This is mostly the women's own fault, for they ruin the beauty of their faces by tattooing their chins. Were it not for this unsightly custom, peculiar to the Arabs, the womenfolk, though corpulent, might be regarded as comely. The men, on the other hand, are fairly handsome, being tall and lean, and having high-bridged noses, flashing black eyes, and

lofty foreheads. I am speaking more especially of the wild Arabs of the desert and not of the townsmen, whose faces, however handsome they may be, are too often marred by an expression of cupidity and cunning.

Jiddah, though dirty, is a very picturesque city. It has narrow serpentine streets which are rarely more than seven or eight feet wide, and is surrounded by five turreted walls of great antiquity rising to a height of twelve feet or so. Of these walls the northern measures in length about seven hundred and thirty-one yards, the southern seven hundred and sixty-nine, the eastern five hundred and eighty-five, the western six hundred and twenty-four, and the south-eastern some three hundred and seventy-nine. There are about three thousand houses in the city, most of which are built of limestone and shut out from the street by walls which sometimes conceal the roofs of the houses within. Here and there a small window in the surrounding walls affords ventilation to the house. It is only a few years since a big well was dug at a place called Bashtar, some two miles distant from the city, the water of which is conducted by means of underground passages. This well bears the name of the reigning Sultan of Turkey. Pure drinking water being scarce, sakkás or water-carriers are seen about the streets carrying the precious liquid on their backs in big leathern bags. Of recent years several mosques and caravanserais and one steam mill have been erected outside the city walls. The governor's residence, together with the post-office and almost all of the more modern buildings, lies outside the walls, facing the Red Sea. The shops, raised not more than a foot above the ground, are about two yards and a half in width and some three yards deep in the interior. Butchers, grocers, fruiterers, and linen drapers are crowded together much as they are in an

English street. The babble within the bazaar is beyond description. Your first conjecture is that a free fight is about to begin between the tradesman and his customer; but, on making ready to intervene in the cause of peace, you find to your pleasure or your chagrin that the vociferous couple shake hands, first by touching the right hand and then by raising both hands to the right eye, after which the shopkeeper makes tender inquiries as to his customer's health, and then the bargaining begins. It took me over an hour to buy a few yards of cloth. The ancient draper was too lazy to reach out for the stuff himself, so he ordered his boy to bestir himself in my interests. The cloth being handed to him, the draper fingered it caressingly, saying: "The cloth is soft to the touch, its splendour dazzles the eyes! Such an exquisite material has not been seen in this market for years!" The cloth was to my liking, and so I made haste to ask the price of it. The draper shook his head reprovingly. Then he said: "Hurry and haste belong to Satan: I usually sell this cloth at thirty piastres a yard to my customers, but to you I will sell it for twenty-five, because you have found favour in my sight." I made him a counter-bid of five piastres a yard in order to cut the barter short. Whereupon the draper, nodding in admiration of my guile, gazed around him for close on five minutes. When he opened his mouth at last it was to say in his most winning voice: "My good sir, since you are looking so well, so handsome, and so distinguished, I will part with this priceless material at the trifling cost to yourself of fifteen piastres a yard." "Not so," I replied. "Since you are a bright old man I will increase my favour in your sight by adding a piastre to my last bid; in other words, I now offer you six piastres a yard." The draper raised his hand to Heaven. "That is impossible! I ask pardon of God." I now turned on my heel and walked away. He called me back at once.

"Sir," he said, "I would not have you leave me in displeasure. Give whatever you like, the cloth is yours. I am your sacrifice." I retraced my steps. "Nonsense," I returned; "how is it possible for me to give what I like for the stuff, since you are the tradesman and know its proper value?" The old man smiled, and said, "Honoured sir, the lowest price I can possibly accept for this material is ten piastres a yard." It was now my turn to smile. "Sir," I replied, "I have no wish to offend you by leaving your shop, and so I will buy the cloth from you for seven piastres a yard instead of going to your rival yonder, who has offered to sell me some at six and a half piastres."

The draper then handed me a stool, and said, smiling, "You are not easy to deal with. Come, sit down, and smoke this hukah, and we shall not part in anger." So I sat down in front of the shop, and while I sucked meditatively at the pipe he handed to me, the stuff was measured, cut, and folded, the tacit understanding between us being that we would meet half-way, namely at eight piastres and a half. By the time I had finished my smoke the material was ready for me, and so I lost no time in returning to the hotel.

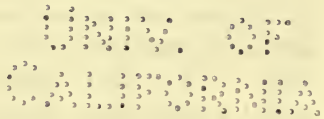
The harvest season of the shopkeepers is during the journeying months. Their most striking characteristic in the eyes of a Persian pilgrim is that they all wear white beards. The reason of this probably is that young shopkeepers would stand not a ghost of a chance of competing successfully with their elderly rivals. Moreover, all greybeards in the Muhammadan religion are entitled to receive special veneration from the young. Another reason is that nearly all the young men are employed by the pilgrims as guides, as servants, and as drivers.

Everything moves slowly in these Arab towns. You

PILGRIMS EMBARKING AT SUEZ.

BEFORE WEIGHING ANCHOR AT SUEZ.

will break the laws of good breeding if you walk fast there. Consider the camel of the desert, how he walks; he hurries not, neither does he make a sound: so take this finnikin creature as your model and form your gait on the camel's. All Orientals pin implicit faith in the doctrine of "slow but sure," and when they give you some work they recommend you to be "slow over it," believing that a thing done smartly is not often done well.



CHAPTER II

FROM JIDDAH TO MECCA

THE time at my disposal being limited, I went at once in search of a guide, who should accompany me to Mecca and thence to Arafat, and put me in the way of performing the rites and mysteries of the Hájj. The men who officiate in that capacity are called *moghavems*. The pick of them had fallen to the lot of the early-comers who had flocked to Jiddah in great numbers ; but with my customary luck, I chanced upon a Persian *moghavem*, whose knowledge of the ceremonies and the holy places of the Pilgrimage was seasoned with the waggish conceits of a singularly original mind. His sceptical witticisms were the more piquant in that he gloried in the name of Seyyid 'Alí. For the rest, he had travelled far and wide, had sat down and laughed beside the waters of Babylon, had wandered on foot as far to the East as Benares, and had undertaken the Pilgrimage of Mecca half a dozen times. I congratulated him on his globe-trotting habit, whereupon he showed a gleam of white teeth, raising himself on the tips of his toes, and stroked his unkempt beard complacently. Then he aired his knowledge of geography. "Yá-Moulai," he said with unexpected gravity, "Allah has had me in His keeping, may He be praised! He has revealed to me the inner-most secrets of the world, and shown to me the whole

creation. I have been everywhere except in Hell, and even that experience will not be withheld from me, I trust, when I come to die. True it is, yá-Moulai, that this life is a riddle; we solve it when we give up the ghost—perhaps. Anyhow, my one desire in this world is to go to Europe that I may see China and study the philosophy of that wonderful land." I had to avert my head lest he should detect the struggle between amusement and politeness which convulsed every feature of my face.

"Ah," said he, "your Excellency is fortunate to have met me: the Hájj Season is far advanced: *moghavems* are scarce: and I am one of the most reasonable of men. If you will burst from the bonds of economics in the matter of salary, you will find in me a pleasant travelling companion and a lettered guide."

"Will two dollars a day content you?" I asked. The offer was a liberal one, and on the spur of a grateful impulse he clinched the bargain without a moment's hesitation. This trait of character endeared him to me, and so I treated him on a footing of social equality so long as he was my cicerone.

Now, the day was the sixth day of the moon: a distance of some forty-six miles lay between us and the Holy City: and, furthermore, since the Pilgrims had to leave Mecca on the 8th for the hill of Arafat, it followed that we had not a single moment to lose in making preparations for our journey. With many words Seyyid 'Alí staked his wages that, by hiring asses and riding alone, we could cover the road in eleven hours. "Of course," said he, "we must run the risk of being attacked by Bedouins who lie in wait for stragglers. Indeed, only two days ago, so the rumour runs in the bazaars, a caravan of forty Persian pilgrims was robbed on leaving Heddah for Mecca: and everybody we meet—depend upon it—will

do his utmost to terrify us with blood-curdling stories of Arab lawlessness and violence. However, let us pin our faith not in firearms and bravado, but in our cool heads and our stout hearts. And, in the meanwhile, I will take you to a caravanserai, where we shall find an acquaintance of mine, who is the owner of a drove of the fleetest asses in Hejaz. His name is Nassir, and he owns allegiance to the fighting clan of Harb. From him we will hire three donkeys: one for your Excellency, one for the effects we have with us, and a third for myself. Nassir will accompany us on foot, and be a protector to us in the wilderness. Let us hasten lest his services be engaged."

After bartering with Nassir, it was settled that I should pay him two dollars for the use of each animal (two-thirds to be paid in advance and one-third on alighting in Mecca), while he himself was to receive, in return for his services, a *bakhshísh* in proportion to his usefulness on the road.

In appearance he was a typical representative of his race, both in bearing and in dress, as well as in accoutrements and in strength. Tall and lean, he had the appearance of a man that had been baked in an oven: his skin was as brown and as wrinkled as a walnut-shell, his features seemed to leap out of the face, while his eyes declared the nobility of a virile though savage nature. He wore a long yellow shirt, reaching below the knees, with a red cotton belt round the waist, in which was stuck an ugly-looking dagger. Slung crosswise over his back a Bedouin generally carries an old-fashioned flint rifle, having a barrel some two yards in length, with a bow-shaped stock covered all over with small square chips of white shells. For this ungainly weapon Nassir substituted a stout Arab club, which was a fortunate thing for Seyyid 'Alí, perhaps, inasmuch as wordy wars between the two men came to be of hourly occurrence.

About five o'clock in the evening, after having smoked a pipe of peace at a coffee-house in the bazaars, we mounted our asses, Seyyid 'Alí and myself, while the fleet-footed driver, go as hard as we might, kept pace with us, without so much as turning a hair. We rode through the Mecca gate, and then bore off in a north-easterly direction in order that I might have an opportunity of visiting Eve's Tomb. This excursion, because it took us a little out of our way, was not to the liking of our Harbi warrior, who, in his anxiety to reach Mecca by sunrise, was bent on sparing both his own breath and his beasts of burden. But I, having made up my mind to pay my respects to the resting-place of our common mother, was not to be gainsaid; and I contrived to convict my opponent of churlishness by making a point of reaching my destination within half an hour—that is in less than half the time he had said it would take.

Assuredly, Arabia is the cradle of credulity. In that land of legend the historian catches his breath. He is ill at ease, alternately bewildered and sceptical, as might be expected of a man, who, reaching out for truth, lays hold of a myth at every step. Thus, on gaining admittance to the enclosure, I was amazed to notice the exceeding length of the Tomb, and on measuring the low walls believed to define the outlines of Eve's body, I found that they were one hundred and seventy-three yards long, and about twelve feet broad. In the centre a low dome is conspicuous; it is said to crown Eve's navel. "What a monster!" I cried, laughing, "easy lies the head of our common mother." The guide corrected me, saying, "The Well of Wisdom is mistaken. The tomb was not long enough to contain her blessed head. It is well known that only the trunk and limbs of her lie here." Rising to my full height, five feet nine in my sandals, I asked him to account for the

dwindling in the size of man. "The Fountain of Learning must remember," he replied, "that Eve, our Mother, fell, and with her fell the stature of the human race." The explanation found a crack in the armour of my credulity, and so, turning back into the direct road, we resumed our journey, joining a caravan of about thirty pilgrims of mixed nationalities, Egyptians, Syrians, Caucasians, Indians, and Malays.

Instead of refreshing breezes, which would have come as a positive godsend, the wind, blowing from the south-west, spread abroad an abominable vapour, and caused the sand to rise and fall like the bosom of the ocean. Sand-heaps twelve feet high might be scattered at any moment in these whirlwinds; but, fortunately, though our asses often sunk over their fetlocks, we reached in safety the Hill of Gaem (the first stage for caravans), where, according to a local superstition, the Messiah will first appear. A small booth here made ample amends for the scarcity of water, and I could not remember ever having tasted more fragrant and delicious coffee.

Slowly but surely the ground now began to rise, and the sand to grow firmer. A caravan of camels glided stealthily by, bells tinkling, pilgrims reciting the Kurán, and the drivers singing to their camels a deeply melodious song called *Hodi*, which has on them the effect of a goad, urging them on to a brisk unchanging pace. To this accompaniment a camel will cover a great distance without stopping, the general belief being that the camel gets drunk with the sweet burden of the *Hodi* song.

Overnight, long after sunset, my Harbi driver himself began to sing aloud in the gathering darkness, asking God to protect him from the goblins of the wilderness, and always in a lugubrious minor key, as if he was going to weep. But ever and anon we heard an original song set

to the music of the desert, wild as the wastes, elusive as the winds, as revealing and obscure as the tuneless solitudes from whose heart it would seem to spring—a song that broke through melody, and added its tameless burden to the music of the spheres. On cultured Europeans these untutored outbursts would have an uncanny effect, causing the centuries to roll back to the days of their barbarian ancestry, and awakening within them, perhaps, one of those haunting dream-memories of birth far back in the misty past, of an anterior existence in keeping with the strains of incoherent minstrelsy when men, labouring under the burdens of consciousness, sang as the spirit moved them, knowing nothing of the laws of counterpoint and harmony. Such a song was sung by Seyyid 'Alí as we left Heddah, a song written by a famous Sufí writer—

" My sorrow is Sorrow ; my companion is Sorrow ; my mate is Sorrow ;
Where'er I go there's none to care for me but Sorrow ;
My Sorrow does not let me sleep alone at night ;
Well done, my mate ! bravo, my mate ! hurrah, my Sorrow ! "

The surrounding hills caught the intonation in their ragged arms and flung it back into the dim-lit sea of eddying sand, echoing and re-echoing the word " Sorrow ! " Then my own Arab driver, carried beyond himself, raised his voice in the self-same song, and soon the whole caravan burst out, crying, "Well done, my mate ! bravo, my mate ! hurrah, my Sorrow," the hills repeating the last word. Wagner, the one master who has given us the music of the sea and the stars, of the winds and the streams, and of all the vague yearnings that torment the human heart, would have understood us, would perhaps have played the part of echo on his return to civilisation, would certainly have joined in the chorus of that wild Arabian air attuned to Arabia's barren though luminous solitudes.

Here, at Heddah, a more than usually serious quarrel arose between Seyyid 'Alí and Nassir on the subject of the national virtues of their respective countries. It would certainly have ended in a free fight, had not I, awaking from a snooze at the uproar, turned to the pugnacious Arab, who had accused the Persian of hypocrisy, and said in a tone of gentle reproof: "Yá Nassir, is it true that a Persian is double-faced?" For the space of a minute he eyed the supercilious Seyyid, deliberating; then he turned to me. "I wish he were only double-faced," he replied, "for then I should know how to deal with him. But Satan has given him as many as two thousand faces, and it is beyond the power of any one man to see them all in his lifetime." I pursued the inquiry, saying, "Oh, Nassir, supposing you were asked to describe the Persian character, how would you sum it up?" This time he turned his flashing eyes on me. "Character comes from conscience," he answered; "but a Persian has none." My guide spat derisively on the sand, muttering, "Courtesy is unknown to these people;" then he addressed me in his own language, saying: "But, yá-Moulai, there's truth in what the burnt-father said, the Almighty Mason having put so many constituents into the clay of a Persian that it is very difficult to analyse it. Our countryman has as many coils and colours as a serpent. He is the essence of politeness and native refinement. He is the personification of jealousy and envy. Conceit and hypocrisy are embodied in him, and so also are generosity and *amour propre*."

The mere sound of the mellifluous Persian drove Nassir beside himself. Raising his stout Arab club, which the Persians call Hájí Yemút or the Pilgrim Slayer, he vowed that he would teach the guide a lesson in courtesy; and then, suddenly bethinking himself that any act

of violence on his part would be sure to affect his pocket in the matter of *bakhshísh*, he turned a contemptuous back upon his adversary, and said to me, smiling all over his face: "This club of mine has many qualifications. It is useful in urging my ass to mend its pace, it gives me support when I am tired, and shelter from the sun when I am sleepy"—here he stuck it in the sand, and tied at the top a strip of cloth on a crossbar—"it serves as a line on which to dry my washed clothes, as an altar when it is the hour for me to pray, as a leaping-pole when a mountain torrent stems my path; and, may Allah be praised, it is my surest defence against all my enemies, be they men or beasts, and so, when I die, God forbid, I will leave it as an inheritance to my son."

Midnight saw us again on the way, and, in the course of our ride over the gravelly ground that rose ever higher the nearer we approached the mountains, we overtook a big caravan that was preceded by a couple of heralds, who bore aloft the green banner of the Faith, whereon was inscribed the Muhammadan watchword. "There is no God but God, and Muhammad is His Messenger." Then came the cavalcade of pilgrims, the rear being brought up by a string of camels, and other beasts of burden, heavily laden with tents and water-skins, or mashks, with kitchen utensils and provisions. Like ourselves, these men were late-comers, but being overburdened they were soon left far in the rear by us, indeed they could not hope to reach Mecca before noon on the following day, whereas we were bent on sighting the Holy City ere the rising of the sun.

At the last resting-house, I struck up acquaintance with a Persian pilgrim, seated on a coarse mat; he declared the Arabs to be cowards, while I defied him to justify this charge. "What!" he cried, "anything will frighten them; they are so superstitious. For instance, if a rabbit spring up at their

feet and run away from them they will pursue it until it is lost to sight. But if the rabbit comes towards them, they will lose heart, turn on their heels and scuttle as fast as they can lay their legs to the ground, the timid creature in hot pursuit at their heels. However, I will admit that they hold fast together, that they are staunch and true to one another, that they will sacrifice their lives to protect their comrades against the strangers at their gates." He then began to scratch himself vigorously, giving voice the while to an impromptu verse. Said he; "From sunset to early dawn there's a merry-making in the kingdom of my body. The mosquitoes are the flutists, the fleas the dancers, and I'm the harpist"—that is, the scratcher, the same word being used in Persian. I left the quaint fellow playing the accompaniment to the dance of the frolicsome fleas and humming mosquitoes, and rode on my way, singing. The ground rose higher and higher. On passing Mount Shíní the road takes a north-easterly direction, and leads to the tomb of Sheykh Mahmud, a priest who is held in special veneration by the Arabs, though the dilapidated state of his grave would scarcely confirm this attitude towards him. And then, at last, on pursuing the way a little further, the minarets of the City of God rise, with the sun, before the pilgrim's eyes. "Oh, would that I, having beheld its domes, might fall and die," is now the true Muslim's devoutest wish.

CHAPTER III

WITHIN THE HAREM—SOME REMARKS ON THE ORTHODOX SECTS OF ISLÁM

THE first thing I did before entering Mecca was to perform my ablutions and say my prayers, according to the custom; and then I rode to the encampment on the outskirts of the city where I hoped to find two Persian friends of mine who, in accordance with a previous arrangement between us, had been good enough to take along with them the camp equipment which they had bought for me at Cairo. When I had discovered their whereabouts, I dismissed Nassir, giving him a liberal present, and then sat down to breakfast, my friends congratulating me upon my safe arrival.

The meal over, Seyyid 'Alí took me under his wing, urging me to accompany him to the Harem of the House of God without loss of time, that we might perform the initial ceremony—namely, the compassing of the Ka'bah — in the cool of the early morning. So bidding my friends good-bye, I set out with my guide, who was in sore straits to cloak his native mirthfulness in the folds of his íhram. Do what he would to conceal his natural character, he could not wholly restrain it within the limits of decorum

incumbent on every pilgrim wearing that winding-sheet of humility.

The streets were crowded with tents, camels, mules, asses, horses, pariah dogs, and a motley crowd of pilgrims. The din the dogs made in the small hours of the day was indescribable. A pack of jackals would be quiet in comparison. Through even the narrowest lanes must pass the lordly Sherîf and his suite, the sun-baked Sheykhs on horseback, the ladies of the harem sitting astride of mules led by their servants, the peasant pilgrims on foot, and every kind of beast of burden heavily laden with water-skins and provisions. Accidents were consequently of hourly occurrence in the press of the throng. On reaching the holy precincts, my guide turned to me and said, in a cautious undertone, pointing to the Ka'bah in the middle of the Harem: "What need have I of the Ka'bah? it is only four walls; the Ka'bah round which I hop is the face of my Beloved."

Now, the word Harem which is used to designate the courtyard of every Muhammadan mosque, means "holy place;" and thus the famous mosque of Mecca or, more correctly, the open court in the middle of which the House of God is situated bears the name of Harem. The same expression is used by the Turks to denote the inner apartments of their houses, since the women who dwell there are held sacred to the family. The Harem of the Holy City is an imperfect rhomboid in shape, its opposite sides being not quite equal. The length extends from east to west and the breadth from north to south. The northern side is one hundred and seventy-eight yards long, and the southern one hundred and eighty, while the western side is one hundred and eighteen yards broad, and the eastern one hundred and seventeen. Of the twenty-two gates that give admittance to its precincts, eight are on the

northern length, four on the eastern breadth, seven on the southern length, and three on the western breadth. The most sacred of these gates are the Gate of Peace (Salám) and the Gate of Purity (Safá). The Gate of Peace, through which the pilgrims must enter, taking care to say the prescribed prayer on its threshold, leads into the extreme north-eastern end of the Harem; while the Gate of Safá is the one in the centre of the southern length, through which the pilgrims must pass out in order to say their prayers on the platform beyond, from which platform, indeed, the gate takes its name of Purity. There are no doors to these gates, and from every one a flight of steps conducts the Faithful down to the Harem, the surface of which lies about twelve feet below that of the streets, dipping gradually another three feet towards the centre, where the Ka'bah stands; and on the walls of each gate are inscribed the names of the four Caliphs, Abú Bekr, 'Omar, 'Othmán, and 'Alí. The Shiahs, having rubbed their hands on the name of the fourth Caliph, raise them to their faces, and say: "May peace be with Muhammad and with his people."

To the best of my reckoning, there are some five hundred and seventy-five pillars in the colonnade that runs round the four sides of the Harem. But the Muhammadans, in general, have a prejudice against counting them, and the Meccans, in particular, declare them to be "innumerable." The eastern side of the Harem is enclosed by a single row of columns, while the other sides have columns three deep. These columns, roughly speaking, measure about two feet in diameter and twenty feet in height. Some of them bear Arabic inscriptions that are scarcely legible now, and others are strengthened by means of iron bands or by iron shafts running from top to bottom. Every third column is

round, standing between two octagonal pillars, some four feet apart; every second column supports a pointed arch; and every fourth column a dome that is whitewashed from without, and painted from within in stripes of blue, red, and yellow. The front of the arches are coloured in the same gaudy fashion, as are also the greater number of the seven beautiful minarets from which the muezzins raise the voice of the Faith calling the pilgrims to prayers. There are three of these minarets along the northern length, one at each corner of the opposite side, a sixth along the eastern breadth, and a seventh at the thither end of the cloister attached to the northern side of the Harem. The columns, with the exception of a few on the northern and eastern sides, said to have been brought from Egypt, reflect no artistic taste whatever on the part of the sculptors that carved them. Those that are made of marble or of porphyry are in one piece—huge blocks rough-hewn by unskilful hands—and the others are made of granite or of sandstone from the neighbouring mountains, and composed of three slabs, shaped, dressed, and then cemented together. At least a dozen raised pavements—called Farsh-ul-Hajar—of varying widths, lead to and from the gates of the Ka'bah, the broadest being from the Zaideh gate to the House of God. The floor of the colonnades is paved all round, but the granite slabs are put together in a very rough and ready fashion. The inner path immediately round the Ka'bah is a few inches below the general surface, itself some fifteen feet below that of the streets without; but beyond the iron pillars, from which are hung the glass lanterns that light up the precincts of the House of God by night, rises a second paved way, somewhat higher than the inner one, about five yards broad, while a third, on a still higher level, is even wider. Bordering on this pavement from without are the

Meghámé Ibrahím, the Tomb of Abraham, the Bábé Shaibeh, the Arch of Peace, and the four Megháms belonging to the four Sunni orthodox sects, behind which runs the gravelled expanse of the Harem. Dozens of sweepers are engaged daily in cleaning the floors and pavements, but their efforts, in face of the crowd all too careless of the laws of cleanliness, are vain.

Of the four Megháms above-mentioned the Meghámé-Hanefi is the largest, and is situated to the east of the Ka'bah, some twelve yards from it. It rests on twelve pillars, is open on all sides, and has a small upper chamber, whence the muezzins call the Hanefites to prayer. These are known as "the followers of reason," and owe their origin to Abú Hanífa al Nómán Ebn Thábet. He was born at Cufa in the eightieth year of the Hegira, and died in the hundred and fiftieth in prison at Bagdad, where he had been confined because he refused to be made a kádi or judge. The reason he gave for refusing to officiate in that capacity may be given in his own words. "If I speak the truth, they'll say I am unfit; but if I tell a lie a liar is not worthy to be a judge." He is said to have read the Kurán no less than seven thousand times during his imprisonment. His doctrine brought into prominence by Abú Yúsúf, Chief Justice under the Caliphs al Hádi and Harún ur Rashid, now prevails generally among the Turks and Tartars. In the time of Ignorance the Kuraish used to hold their councils where the Meghámé-Hanefi now stands. The Maleki pulpit, to the south-west of the Ka'bah, is a small building open on all sides, and resting on four pillars. The learned doctor who founded the sect of the Malekites was called Malek Ebn Ans. He was born at Medina in the year ninety of the Hegira, and there he also died at the age of eighty-seven. His teaching is based

on the traditions of the Prophet. On his death-bed he said to a friend who found him in tears: "How should I not weep, and who has more reason to weep than I? Would to God that for every question decided by me according to my own opinion I had received so many stripes, then would my accounts be easier. Would to God I had never given any decision of my own." His followers are scattered over Africa, mainly in Barbary. The Sháfeïtes have their Meghám on the top of the cupola-crowned building which covers the Zem-Zem well, whence the criers call to worship, but the congregation pray round the Ka'bah itself. The author of this, the third orthodox sect, went by the name of Muhammad Ebn Edris al Sháfeí. His birthplace is uncertain. Some say he was born at Caza, others at Ascalon, in Palestine, on the very day that Abú Hanifa died in the year one hundred and fifty of the Hegira. At the age of seven he was taken to Mecca, where he was educated. He is said to have been the first Muhammadan to reduce the science of jurisprudence into a systematic method, and he was undoubtedly a man of great learning, of sincere piety, and of calm, deliberate judgment. Two sayings attributed to him throw a light on his character: "Whoever pretends to love the world and its Creator at the same time is a liar;" "I am considering first whether it be better to speak or to hold my tongue." This was said to a man who, having asked his opinion and received no reply, demanded an explanation of this silence. The doctrine of this sect, like that of the Malekites, is founded on the traditions of Muhammad, and is now embraced by a good many people in Arabia and by a few in Persia as well.

The Meghám of the fourth orthodox sect, that bears the name of Hanbalí, is situated not far from the Zem-Zem well, opposite the Black Stone—which is itself embodied in the

south-eastern wall of the Ka'bah—and is of the same structure as that of the Sháfeïtes. It is there that the Sherîf and many of the other dignitaries perform their worship. It is divided into two compartments by means of a canvas wall, the men occupying the front, and the women the back part, at evening prayers. There are two traditions as to the birth-place of Ahmed Ebn Hanbal, who founded this school of religious thought. Those who believe him to have been born at Merú, in Khorasán, the native city of his parents, assure us that his mother brought him thence to Bagdad when he was still at the breast; while others declare that he was born after his mother's arrival in that city, in the year of the Hegira 164. He was an intimate friend of al Sháfeí, who was also his master, and was so well instructed by him in the traditions of the Prophet that it is said he could repeat over a million of them. On his return from Egypt he refused to acknowledge the Kurán to be created, and was consequently scourged and cast into prison by order of the Caliph al Mutasem. On the day of his death no fewer than twenty thousand Christians, Jews, and Magians embraced the Mussulman faith, and he was followed to his grave by eight hundred thousand men and sixty thousand women. This sect soon became extremely powerful, so much so indeed that in the year 323 H., in the Caliphate of al Rádi, they burst from all restraint in their iconoclastic zeal, breaking into people's houses in Bagdad, spilling any wine they found, chastising the singing women they came across, and smashing their musical instruments in bits. A severe edict had the effect of bridling their undisciplined fervour, so that the Hanbalites are not very numerous nowadays outside the boundaries of Arabia. The followers of these four men worship together in the evening, but at other times they pray in the order of their seniority. The four pulpits were erected, in 973 of the

Hegira, by Sultán Suleymán, who also founded, outside the Harem, a school for fifteen students under a head master and a preacher for each one of the orthodox sects, allotting to every school a portion of the floor of the Harem as a place of worship. These schools are said to be still flourishing, and are subsidised from the funds of the Ka'bah.

Before the time of the Prophet the ground on which the Harem is now situated belonged to several landlords of the tribe of Kuraish, who laid great store by the property on account of its proximity to the House of God. To Omar, the second Caliph, the idea of extending the Harem first occurred, and it was he who built the walls round it. The gates were erected by Abdullah Zobair. Thenceforward every Caliph and every Sultán made a point of beautifying the sacred enclosure until it came at last to wear its present appearance. However, considering the enormous sums contributed by the quick and the dead on purpose to keep it in repair it is being shamefully neglected in this year of the Flight. How the priests who batten on the fund can find it in their consciences to watch the decay of their surroundings without loosening their purse-strings in order to check it is a source of wonder to many a child of Islám. They are "resigned," these unrighteous stewards, for no other reason than because theirs is a bed of roses. "After us the Deluge" is their motto, and it cannot be denied that of all the sacred places of the Faith that of the Harem, situated as it is in the gap of the surrounding cliffs and dipping as it does towards the centre where the Ka'bah stands, is the best adapted to be a target to the winds and the rain. For the floods, when they descend, rush down the flights of steps of the gateways and inundate the open sanctuaries, and that is why the Ka'bah has been so often destroyed

and rebuilt in the course of the centuries. These priests of the Harem may be as wise as serpents where their own interests are involved, but they are not so harmless as doves where those of the Faithful in general clamour for redress.

Talking of the Deluge reminds me of the pigeons that strut about the floor of the Harem or wing their flight above its sacred buildings. They are the prettiest birds imaginable, and so tame that they will come and perch on the pilgrims' shoulders and feed out of their hands. In colour they are of a blueish brown, with deeper spots of the same colour on their breasts and backs. They have grey rings round their necks, and their wings are streaked with black lines. A traditionist says that to feed one of these birds is to ensure to one's self a sumptuous palace in heaven; whereas to kill one of them is as bad as committing homicide, and meets with the same punishment hereafter. The consequence of this belief is that there are crowds of women whose business it is to sell grain to the pilgrims for the Harem pigeons, about twenty grains of wheat in a box costing not less than one piastre. The tradition was that the pigeons never alighted on the domes and minarets of the Harem, but hovered above them, like guardian angels. The fact that the sanctuaries now stand in frequent need of whitewashing is taken to be a proof of the growing wickedness of the people, and a certain sign that the Day of Judgment is at hand.

On entering the Harem all men are equal, all privileges of rank must be waived. The most despotic Oriental ruler has no power over his fellows there. Even the Hereditary Sherîf of Mecca must be as courteous to his servants or his slaves as he would be to the Sultan of Turkey were he present. Everybody is come to worship his Creator, the

Ruler Supreme over empires and republics, and so all distinctions of rank are laid aside. The Prophet, wise in his generation beyond all men, was the first to protect the helpless against despotism by ruling the conduct of human affairs through the principle of religious equality. But for his laws the lower classes of the East would have been at the mercy of their co-religionists of the higher castes. If the Prophet alternately cajoled and coerced the superstitious to be virtuous and meek by the promise of a material Paradise and by the fear of a material Hell, what then? He sought merely to achieve his end through the weaknesses of the natural man, knowing that there is nothing that men covet more than the permanent pleasures which satiate human passions, and nothing that they had rather shun than a punishment which endures for ever. The spirit of his teaching and his laws, however, was anything but material. It made for unity and fraternity and equality, and the consequence was that in the early days of the Faith his followers were inspired by the noblest aspirations of the mind and heart. And as for the corporeal joys of Paradise they knew that these were not the highest their Prophet had promised to them, for they hoped to attain to that most blessed degree of heavenly felicity which is reserved for the Faithful who are found worthy to behold God's face from the rising of the sun till the going down of the same. The case is otherwise with the majority of the Muhammadans of to-day. For their country and their countrymen they take too little thought, each one of them beseeching God to shower His favours on himself or herself alone. The priests of the Golden Age of the Faith sat on a camel or stood on a high hill and preached, not on form but on spirit. Their watchword was unity—unity of religion under the banner of faith and charity. To-day, on the contrary, the Mullás of Mecca mount a pulpit

A MOORISH GENTLEMAN IN MOORISH DRESS.

and air their erudition, that is, their knowledge of the traditions, as they interpret them according to their respective schools, and end with a few wandering, lifeless sentences in condemnation of all heretics, in contempt of this life, and in praise of the world to come. A philosopher would consider their sermons ridiculous. The freethinkers of the times of 'Omar and 'Alí had no sound excuse for raising their voices against the priests, who were then the guides of the mind as well as those of the conduct. But the wonder now is that a Faithful can be found to obey the behests of these tradition-ridden miracle-mongers, who do nothing to lessen the breach between the sects, but leave the more enlightened laymen to lead the way to reunion.

Muhammad set these miracle-mongers a good example. For we read that when Muaz was appointed Governor of Yemen he was asked by the Prophet by what rule he would be guided in the administration of the province. "By the law of the Kurán," said Muaz. "But if you find no direction therein?" "Then I will act according to the example of the Prophet." "But if that fails?" "Then I will exercise my own judgment." Muhammad not only approved of the answer of his follower, but also advised his other representatives to follow the same rule of conduct. That rule ought to be written over the door of every mosque in Islám. My Meccan experiences prove this, that the faith of the priest is stagnant from the want of the breath of reason. In its decadence Islám is priest-begotten and priest-ridden. In its purity it was full of the spirit of the Holy Ghost, a religion simple and sincere, whereof such men as 'Alí and 'Omar were made. The founder would be the first to cleanse the minds of his present-day disciples of the false traditions that have been ascribed to him. He would bid

them look up, facing the light, and setting their thoughts free to soar. In his lifetime he, believing "God to be more loving to His servants than the mother to her young," fought strenuously and with a patience almost sublime to overcome the corrupt and idolatrous practices of his fellow-countrymen of the time of Ignorance. Not otherwise would he fight to-day in order to free his co-religionists from the ever-permeating spread of the priestly misinterpretations of his message. His voice would be raised to proclaim the right of every man to reject what is unreasonable in the dictations of the priests. "Knowledge," said he on one occasion, "is our friend in the desert, our companion when friendless, our ornament among friends, our armour against our enemies. . . . To listen to the words of the learned and to inculcate the lessons of science is of more value than religious exercises."

Now, a religion which is lively to-day chiefly through the appeal it can make to what is corporeal and comfortable, as is undoubtedly the case with Islámism at the present time, stands in sore need of a spiritual reformer, the more so because its spirit is still alive, in the pages of the Kurán and in the memory of the mighty dead. Many Muslims still seek the name, and are diligent in seeking it, but they less often try to find the object, forgetting that the moon is not in the stream but in the sky. "He, God, is the Enduring, and all else passeth away"—all except such futile traditions as, heaven knows, are dead enough to have earned a decent burial, and the arbitrary ruling of the priests, to whose pernicious influence there would appear to be no limit. The hearts of these unrighteous stewards deserve to be branded with the two matchless odes, admirably translated by Professor Browne, of Cambridge University, which are inscribed on the tomb of Háfiz,

in an orange garden at Shíráz, the two first lines of which run :

"Where is the good tidings of union with Thee? for I will rise up with my whole heart;
I am a bird of Paradise, and I will soar upwards from the snare of the world."

And again :

"O heart, be the slave of the King of the World, and be a king!
Abide continually under the protection of God's favour!"

CHAPTER IV

COMPASSING OF THE KA'BAH

WHEN we reached the outer gateway of the Bábé Salám, which leads into the vestibule, it was to bow humbly and then to prostrate ourselves twice on the threshold, kissing its sacred dust. After this we rose, saying aloud, with closed eyes and outstretched hands:

"O God, this city is Thy city and this temple Thy temple. I am come hither in search of Thy compassion, and in perfect obedience to Thy commands. O Lord, I am submissive to Thy power, I am in passive contentment with Thy chastisements, I seek the fulfilment of all my desires from Thee and from none but Thee. Oblige me with Thy divine compassion, O God, and fling open to me the gates of Paradise."

We then passed into the vestibule, and, no sooner did our eyes behold from the inner gateway the surface of the Harem than we stretched out our hands once more to the sky and closed our eyes in prayer, saying:

"O Lord, this harem is Thy harem and the harem of Thy apostle. Therefore, since I am here in response to Thy command, preserve my flesh and blood from the fire of Hell and deliver me from Thy punishments on the Day of Judgment."

Then, advancing the left foot, we said:

"O God, grant me Thy protection from the temptations of the devil—may he be accursed! I praise Thy prophet, O Lord, and also his disciples; O, forgive me my sins and open on me the gates of Thy mercy."

Next, when we walked through the inner gateway, and went down the double flight of steps leading to the colonnades, whence the Ka'bah twinkled on us its dusky, square face, we bowed reverently to the House of God and forthwith recited the prayer, which being interpreted, runs:

"In the Name of the great Lord who is alone. There is no god like unto Him. O God, I visit this Thy temple, praising Thee, and glorifying Thy name. Nothing can be done save through Thee, for Thine is the power, and Thine the will alone."

Then I paused awhile, and my eyes took in the impressive scene.

The open Harem, surrounded on a higher level by the colonnades that are surmounted by the crescented domes, was packed with pilgrims from every quarter of Islám. In the middle is the Ka'bah, hemmed in on three sides of its solid cubic walls by the semi-circular row of columns already described. Now, facing the gold Spout, on the outer side of the pillared enclosure, stands the station of the Hanifites. There, in front of the pulpit, were grouped in the space between the paved ways and in every attitude of worship the followers of reason. Some were standing erect, their hands folded on their breasts, others were kneeling on their prayer rugs, and many were bowed to the lump of clay. Opposite to them were praying the Hanbalites before the pavilion-shaped pulpit that forms the extreme limit of the enclosure on the side nearest to the Black

Stone. Priests and peasants, merchants and princes, all had come from far and near to render unto God their hearts and minds in accordance with the law of the Prophet. Those living people clothed in the garments of the dead, there they were, in the very centre whence had sprung the Faith that flashed forth its rays over the East, there they were, and why? To do homage to Him whom Muhammad had made manifest and had delighted to honour thirteen hundred and twenty years ago. It must be conceded, even by the sceptical and the scoffer, that the voice of the "illiterate" Prophet has still the power to work wonders. Hark, his followers are shouting their allegiance to his watchword. Up go their voices to the burning sky overhead: "There is no god but God! Muhammad is the Messenger of God!"

Few could remain silent on hearing the cry of Faith within the columned square of the Harem. It rang out like a trumpet-call, filling the heart with an emotion never felt before. Sincere and true, it drowned the rambling eloquence of the priest haranguing the Malekites out there to the west. It gathered in volume as it passed from lip to lip until the very pillars of the Harem seemed to shake. And then from time to time was sung the Talbih, which might be called the song of the winding-sheet, so frequently was it repeated by the pilgrims in íhrám:

Labbaik, Allahomma, Labbaik!
Labbaik, la Sherika lak Labbaik!
Labbaik, enal-hamda, vanahmeta lak Labbaik!
Labbaik, la Sherika lak Labbaik!

It swelled ever higher, my guide and I joining in the chorus of praise and thanksgiving, since it was our bounden duty so to do on setting foot inside the sacred precincts. Having fulfilled the law of the Prophet or of tradition in

that particular, we were about to direct our steps to the Ka'bah through the old gate of Beni-Sheybeh, which is similar in shape to a triumphal arch, when my guide, standing suddenly stockstill, turned on me a countenance of such antic self-reproach that I was more than half afraid he had made up his mind to wring from me a present ere he would pursue his avocation. Perhaps my determination to resist his blandishments expressed itself in my face, for he lost no time in correcting the impression he had made, saying: "Yá-Moulai, I ask pardon of al Moakkibát, I prostrate myself before the two guardian angels who, in order to cope with the difficulty of recording in their respective books the good and the evil actions of every Muslim, are changed from day to day, and I entreat the ones who are on duty now not only to overlook the negligence whereof I accuse myself, but also to allow me to retrieve, to the furtherance of our eternal welfare, the blunder which I have committed. Know then, that to him who reads a certain prayer near the Salám Gate, after descending the steps thereof and passing the colonnades, shall be granted the free gift of one hundred thousand good deeds, together with this additional benefit, that an equal number of his sins shall be blotted out. Come, yá-Moulai, let us lose no time in laying down the burden of our misdeeds." So saying, he conducted me to the proper place, and made me repeat after him the following prayer:

"I begin in the name of God, and by the help of God, from God and towards God, and through what is ordained by God, and on the faith of the apostle of God. Praise be to God, peace be with the apostle of God, peace be with Muhammad, the son of Abdullah. O prophet of God, may God in His compassion grant thee His peace! And may peace be with all the prophets of God: with Abraham, the friend of God, and with the messengers of God. Praise be

to the Lord of the two worlds. May peace be with us, and with all the pious creatures of God. O Lord, may Muhammad be praised, and may his people be praised. May Muhammad be glorified, and may his people be glorified. May Muhammad be redeemed, and may his people be redeemed. May Abraham be praised, and all his people. O Lord, verily, Thou art magnanimous, and highly to be praised. O Lord, I praise Muhammad Thy slave and Thy prophet. O Lord, I praise Abraham Thy friend, and all Thy messengers. O Lord, open to me the gates of Thy mercy, and bring me into obedience to Thee and into submission to Thy will. O Lord, protect me under the shelter of faith. For, verily, I am Thy slave, O Lord, and Thy guest in this Thy house. O Lord the Compassionate, I remind thee that there is no Lord but Thee. Thou art alone, and hast no mate. Thou art everlasting. Thou begettest not, neither art Thou begotten, and there is not any one like unto Thee. Verily, Muhammad is Thy slave and Thy apostle—may peace be with him and with his people. O Generous, O Magnanimous, O Exalted, O Just!"

Then we said three times, "God is Great!" and then, "I seek shelter in Thee from the snares of the devils of man and jinn, and from the evils that may betide the Arab and Ajem!" We afterwards put the right foot foremost on the floor of the Harem, and thence returned with steady steps to the arch of Beni-Sheybeh, which is hard by the tomb of Abraham, and there we raised our hands again and cried: "O Lord, grant me admittance into Thy place of righteousness, and likewise a safe return therefrom, and send down to us by Thy saving power a mighty king that we may say: 'Then came Right and destroyed Wrong. Verily, Wrong is destroyable.'"

Now, the first ceremony of the Tewaff—that is, of the compassing of the Ka'bah—must be performed in front of the Hajerul-Asvad or Black Stone—a sacred relic which

requires a short description before we proceed on our way round the Ka'bah: and as an introduction to this description we must relate the story of the creation of Adam, as told by the Muhammadans. They tell us that God, having resolved to fashion a creature in his own likeness, sent the angels, Gabriel, Michael, and Israfil, one after another, to fetch for that purpose seven handfuls of earth from seven depths and of seven colours. The earth, however, foreseeing the revolt of man from the will of his Creator, persuaded the angels to return without performing God's command, so sure was she of drawing down on herself the divine wrath should the inanimate clay be made to breathe. The angel Azraïl was then despatched by God on the same errand, and he, closing his heart against the earth's appeal, executed his commission remorselessly, on which account the Lord appointed him to be the angel of death, charging him thenceforward to separate the souls from the bodies. The earth which Azraïl had taken was carried to a place between Mecca and Tayef, where it was first kneaded by the angels, and then moulded by God into a human form. It was afterwards left to dry for the space of forty years, the angels visiting it frequently. Among these angels was Edris—who from being of those that are nearest to God became the devil—and he, not contented with looking on the work of the Creator, which he knew to have been designed to be his superior, vowed he would never acknowledge it as such, and he kicked it till it rang. Then God breathed His own spirit into the clay, so that it was made man, and God called his name Adam, and placed him in Paradise, and formed Eve out of his left side.

Now, when Adam fell and was cast out of Paradise there fell with him a certain Stone, which has since become the most cherished possession in the Muhammadan world. The legend runs that it was restored to Paradise at the

Deluge, after which it was brought back to the earth by Gabriel and given to Abraham, who set it in the south-eastern corner of the Ka'bah, which he is said to have built. There it remained till the Karmatians—that sect, founded in the year 278 of the Hegira by a native of Khúzistán called Karmata, which overturned the fundamental points of Islám—bore it away in triumph to their capital, having first polluted its sacred precincts by burying there three thousand dead bodies, by tearing the golden Spout from its place, and by dividing among themselves the veil of the temple itself. The citizens of Mecca sought to redeem the Stone by offering no less than five thousand pieces of gold for it; but the ransom was scornfully rejected by the impious sectaries, who hoped by keeping it in their possession to draw the pilgrims from the Holy City to their own capital. Some twenty-two years later, however, having failed to achieve the purpose they had at heart, they sent back the Stone of their own free will, covering their discomfiture by declaring it to be a counterfeit. The dismay of the Meccans was allayed when they discovered that the stone would swim on water, that being the peculiar quality of the stone they had lost, and so they were satisfied that the true one had been returned to them.

At first the Stone was whiter than milk, but it grew to be black, either by the touch of a certain class of woman, by the sins of mankind, or by the kisses of the pilgrims. All believers, whatever may be the cause to which they attribute the change of colour, agree that the defilement is purely superficial, the inside of the Stone being still as white as the driven snow. Let us hope that the same thing can be said of the hearts of the Faithful, whose lips are supposed to have wrought on this lodestone of theirs a transformation so miraculous. The silver box wherein it

lies is about twenty inches square, and is raised a little more than five feet from the ground. A round window having a diameter of some nine inches is kept open on purpose to enable the pilgrims to kiss or to touch the treasure within, which is known as "the right hand of God on earth." This year the act of osculation was not performed by more than ten pilgrims out of every hundred that attempted it, the crowd being utterly undisciplined in its zeal. It must be confessed that I owed my good fortune to main strength, for I shoved my way through the excited mob and examined the Stone curiously while kissing it. In colour it is a shining black; in shape, hollow like a saucer, presumably the result of the pressure of devoted lips. A pilgrim, if he fail in touching the Stone, must make a reverential salám before it, and then pass on. Special prayers are also said. My guide, before leaving, recited for my edification certain lines from the "Fotúhúl Haremeyn," which in rhythmic prose would run something like this:

"Think not that the Ka'bah was made from the earth—in the body of the world it took the place of the heart. And the stone that you call the Black Stone was itself a ball of dazzling light. In ages past, the Prophet said, it shone like the crescent moon, until at last the shadows, falling from the sinful hearts of those that gazed on it, turned its surface black. Now, since this amber gem that came to the earth from Paradise with the Holy Ghost has received such impressions on itself, what should be the impressions which our hearts receive? Verily, whosoever shall touch it, being pure of conscience, is like unto him that has shaken hands with God."

In front of this Stone, the first rite is performed: it is called Niyyat or Determination. The various forms and ceremonies at this stage of the pilgrim's initiation vary with

the sect to which he belongs, but six points are common to all Muhammadans. First, Niyyat, including the declaration of passive obedience to God's will, the belief in His day of judgment, and the formal repentance of all sins committed; second, the frequent recitation of the watchword of the Faith which is called Takbir; third, the reading of Esteghfar, a short chapter of repentance and of tacit submission to God's ordnance; fourth, certain formulæ in praise of Allah and the Prophet, which are known by the name of Tahleel; fifth, the intoning of Hamde, which is the chapter of praise; and lastly, the lively repetition of Ghúl-hú-Allah, which runs: "In the name of the most merciful God. Say, God is one God; the eternal God: He begetteth not, neither is He begotten: and there is not any one like unto Him." The pilgrim, on making his "Determination," must raise his hands to his cheeks, putting the thumbs under the lobes of his ears, and stretch up his shoulders, allowing his chest to droop inward, and say in a voice toned to a reverent spirit: "O Allah, Thou art omnipotent, Thou art glorified. I purpose, in Thy excellent name, to make seven complete circuits round Thy blessed house." Having repeated this after the motewaff or guide, I cried out: "In the name of God, God is great!" Then the stream of Hájís caught me to its bosom, and I was tossed about as in a whirlpool. Fortunately Seyyid 'Alí stuck close to my side, and there, in the eddying torrent of human beings that gave forth a sound as of a swelling sea, we raised our voices, my motewaff and I, one after the other, and cried: "O Allah, I do perform this rite out of the fulness of my belief in Thee, in acknowledgment of Thy book, and in faithfulness to Thy covenant, according to the example of Thy prophet Muhammad—may he be blessed and glorified!" And all the while we struggled as hard as we could to get within touch of the Hajerul-Asvad, which, as we knew

well from the pressure of the throng, was the lodestone that drew the sheeted pilgrims to the south-eastern corner of the house. Now we were driven forward, and then we were hurled back; indeed, the bare-footed Faithful, seeing their hopes alternately rise and fall, grew grimly resolute to kiss the Black Stone, cost them what it might. The yearning to do so, which had filled their hearts with piety in the seclusion of their homes, gave place at close quarters to a determination so fierce and so uncontrollable as might have offered to a cool-headed spectator a living picture of Pandemonium. Every now and then a pilgrim would succeed in snatching a hasty kiss, after which he would be flung aside, and another, less fortunate than himself, would have to be contented with touching the Stone with his hand and kissing that; but by far the greater number had no other choice than to pass on with a salaam expressive of good intentions. Some said their prayers with the tongue of their hearts, and with tears in their eyes; others said them aloud, the sweat streaming down their cheeks. "O Lord, I bring my heart and soul to Thee, I acknowledge Thy Book faithfully, I give evidence that there is not any one equal to Thee, and I promise to obey Thy Commandments."

Opposite to the place called al-Moltezem, between the Black Stone and the gate of the Ka'bah, we paused and said: "O Allah, Thou who art omnipotent, I beseech Thee to pardon my sins in violating Thy commands." A few steps forward brought us face to face with the gate itself, whose threshold is raised so high above the ground that the pilgrims must mount by means of steps moving on wheels which are kept alongside a wall of the Zem-Zem well when not in use. There we stopped again, saying:

"O Allah, this house is Thy house, this sanctuary is Thy sanctuary, this peaceful shelter is Thy shelter, and this

place is the place of all those that flee to Thee from hell-fire. O Allah, Thy house is great and Thou art magnanimous; verily, Thou art compassionate and merciful. From fire, O Allah, and from the cursed Satan deliver me: yea, render my flesh and blood scatheless in the fire of hell, and pour on me Thy mercy on the day of judgment, and shower on me Thy blessings in this world and the next."

We proceeded thence to the north-eastern angle called the Rokné-Araghi, where we halted in order to ask another blessing, and cried out in a tone of deepest contrition: "O Allah, I take refuge with Thee from evil, from doubt, from disobedience, from disunion, from immorality, from hypocrisy, and from all evil thoughts concerning one's family and one's estate." And when we went in front of the Mizab, gold Spout, a few paces farther on, it was to say: "O Allah, grant me refuge under the canopy of Thy heaven on the day whereon there is no shelter save Thy shelter. O Allah, make me to drink of the same cup as Muhammad, on whom be blessings and glory!" Then we proceeded on our way till we reached the Rokné-Shami or the north-western angle, and there we said: "O Allah, may it please Thee to accept this pilgrimage, making it a praiseworthy perseverance and a laudable deed. O Compassionate, O Beloved, O Lord, O Merciful, and Omnipotent!" Next, on reaching the south-western angle or Rokné-Yemani, we fell again to praying, in accordance with the law: "O, Allah, our Lord and Ruler, grant us prosperity in this world and happiness in the next, and deliver us from the punishments of fire. O Allah, I seek shelter in Thee from infidelity and from poverty and from the sorrows of life and from the pangs of death; I also take refuge in Thee from ignominy in this world and in the world to come." The last prayer we said was at the starting point, facing the Black Stone. Finding it impossible to approach within

arm's reach, we lifted up our hands from afar, and then bowed, saying: "O Lord of this sacred relic, I flee to Thee and to 'Thy right hand on earth' from all want and also from all infidelity."

In this, the first circuit or "shaut," we used the step called "harvaleh," walking briskly and shrugging the shoulders up and down, and we adopted the same gait on the second and third "ashwat" (plural form of "shaut"). But, in performing the remaining four circuits, a more grave and stately tread was assumed according to the custom. This ordinary eastern walk is called "teamol" and combines dignity of demeanour with leisure of pace; it is a contemplative fashion of walking, what the French would call *recueilli*, and is admirably suited to a pilgrim's devotional stroll round the House of God. On the other hand, the reformer who should wish to introduce the go-ahead civilisation of the West could not begin better than by levying a prohibitive tax on the "teamol." Sale records the tradition that this sevenfold compassing of the Ka'bah was ordered by Muhammad, "that his followers might show themselves strong and active, to cut off the hopes of the infidels, who gave out that the immoderate heats of Medina had rendered them weak." A second tradition is that the circular motion represents the orbicular motion of the heavenly bodies; a third, that it is meant to symbolise the Egyptian wheels, those hieroglyphics of the instability of human fortune; and a fourth, that it arose from a custom among the Pagan Arabs, who, if they wished to humble themselves, were wont to walk seven times round the person or persons whom they delighted to exalt. Anyhow, the compassing of the Ka'bah, be its origin what it may, is held by the Muhammadans to be an act of self-sacrifice from man to God. I was much struck by the fact that the victims of cholera and of other diseases were borne round

the sacred precincts in rude wooden coffins by their friends, who cried out in tones of lamentation, "Yá-Allah! Yá-Allah!" It was an impressive funeral procession, and is said to relieve the pressure of the grave, and to insure to the corpse a safe and a speedy entrance into Paradise. The Tewaff is brought to a close by a reverential visit to the tomb of Abraham, which faces the door of the House. It is an open pavilion resting on four pillars, and crowned with a crescented cupola.

There my guide and I, taking up our position on the thither side of the tomb which was thus placed between ourselves and the House of God, prostrated ourselves twice, saying our morning prayers the while; and then, sitting on our hips, we raised our hands to the sky and said with closed eyes:

"We give praise to Thee, O Lord, we glorify Thee in the name of Muhammad—may peace be with him and with his people! O God, accept this Hájj from me, and allow it not to be the last one. I praise thee, O Lord, in all Thy attributes, I praise Thee for all Thy blessings; I praise Thee for all Thou willest, I praise Thee for all Thy power. O Lord, accept this worship from me, and cleanse my heart, and sharpen my sense of duty. Take compassion on me, O God, for my worship's sake, and because I accept the words of Thy prophet—on whom be peace! O Lord, make me to detest those that do not worship Thee, and make me to love those who love Thee, and those who love Thy prophet and Thy angels and all Thy pious creatures."

Then, bowing our foreheads to the ground, we said aloud:

"O Lord, I worship Thee on my face; there is no God but Thee; Thou art just and merciful; Thou art the beginning of everything, and the end of everything; for Thine is the management and Thine the power alone. O

Thou that forgivest the sins of Thy people, pardon my offences, for in Thee do I now confess my sins. Verily, no one can pardon grave sinners except Thyself. I say, there is not any one to be compared with Thee."

The rewards of a correct performance of the Tewaff and of the necessary prayers—preferably at sundown, the best time for meditation—are of a sort to render the rite extremely popular among the pilgrims. At every step they take, in making the seven circuits, no fewer than seventy thousand sins will be blotted out of their bad books, and an equal number of virtues be added to the companion volumes containing their good actions. Nor is this all, for they will be made, at the same rate, the intercessors of seventy thousand sinners; they will build up to themselves the same number of palaces in heaven, and will earn the fulfilment of seven hundred thousand of their desires in this world, and of seventy thousand in the world to come. And that, no doubt, is why we took precious care that our steps, even when walking briskly, as we were obliged to do for the first three circuits, should be, if smart, extremely short ones.

CHAPTER V

THE COURSE OF PERSEVERANCE

HAVING encompassed the Ka'bah seven times, we stood hard by the tomb of Abraham and watched the pilgrims fighting to kiss the Black Stone. The wonder was that we had emerged from the tight scrimmage with a skin more or less whole. The perspiration oozed out of the pores in streams: laying hold of the fag end of my sacred habit I wiped my forehead. "You must not touch yourself," said Seyyid 'Alí; "it is a grievous sin." "Let your conscience rest in peace," I replied; "I will do penance by sacrificing a sheep."

The guide smiled. "There is no stain, however vile, but money shall blot it out. Would that I were a rich man!" "Thou fool," I cried, "how about the stain of superstition? Will money wipe it out, think you?" "Yá-Moulai," he whispered, "speak low. . . . Listen. It is easier to dig the heart out of a mountain with the sharp end of a needle than to remove ignorance from the mind of a mullá. However, the Course of Perseverance has yet to be trod. Come let us hop and be of good courage, for to-morrow we must go in procession to Arafat. We must begin again with Niyyat; that is, with a declaration of intention in front of the Black Stone, and after that we must proceed to Safá, and say our prayers there." "I ask pardon of Allah!" I shrilled. "Look, the people will be trodden under foot near the Black Stone!" The guide was

silent, his eyes were turned to where the crowd was thickest. "Look," he said, "a man is down. They are trampling him to death. That has often happened. In 581 of the Hegira no less than eighty-four men were trodden to death inside the Ka'bah. In 972 of the Flight sixty-five men were suffocated through the pressure of the crowd in the Harem itself. . . . Praise Allah, the man is up again. . . . See, his friends are bearing him to a place of safety." . . .

God of love, what a sight! "He has achieved merit," said the guide, "except, it may be, in the eyes of the 'mother of his children.' She will cease to love him when she sees him. However, he may die, and thus she may be spared the shock of—did you—but what have I done to offend you?" My reply was curt. "I find your levity somewhat tedious," I said impatiently. The wag was irrepressible. He waxed argumentative suddenly, affirming that the snares of the heart are beauty of face and charm of voice. He bade me to look on his own manly countenance. I might believe it or not, but even he had been deceived more than once. What chance of keeping love, therefore, had the wretch whose face had been stamped as flat as the palm of his hand? "Listen, and I will hum you a song," he whispered, "but it must be low, since it concerns the heart, the theme of the poets, and not the soul, which is the concern of the priests. For my part I am on the side of the poets. Even in Mecca. The song is old. It was sung by Adam in the Garden of Eden after the Fall. I have found it true. Therefore, and for no other reason, it is worth quoting—

"'Oh, heart of mine, how often canst thou trace
Thy aching wounds to one bright maiden's Face!
How often must, amid discordant din,
Another's Voice be toned to take you in!

"'Yet ah, my heart, among thy darling foes,
Was one that matched both Nightingale and Rose;
A Flow'r, she bloomed a day; a Bird, her flight
She winged . . . and turned thy Day to endless Night.'"

"Alas, my poor heart, its disease is incurable, I fear. No matter. Safá awaits our coming. We will go and 'declare our intention,' and then be off to the hill of Purity. Let us skip and hop, for to-morrow we die. Yá-Allah! yá-Muhammad!" So, approaching as near as we could to the Black Stone, we closed our eyes, giving it as our determination to run seven times between the platforms of Safá and Marveh, and to recite the prescribed prayers at the appointed places. It is considered an act of grace in the devout to proceed thence to the Zem-Zem well, and, drawing a bucket of water by means of the windlass with his own hands, to besprinkle therewith his head and back and stomach, after which he should drink a handful of the water, repeating the following prayer: "O Lord, I beseech Thee to make this draught for me a source of inexhaustible knowledge, a vast livelihood, and a preventive of all pains and diseases."

Frequent allusion is made to this spring in Arabian and Persian literature. Its water ranks second to that of Kúsar, a stream that runs in the Garden of Paradise, keeping the grass ever green and the flowers ever blooming. The prettiest ruby wine is compared by the poets to the water of Zem-Zem; for they believe it to be the spring that "gushed out for the relief of Ishmael," when Hagar, his mother, wandered beside him in the wilderness. The story goes that when she saw the bubbling water it was to call to her son, in the Egyptian tongue, "Zem, zem!" ("Stay, stay!"). The taste of the water is difficult to describe, but it is certainly bitterish. My guide, to whom I had appealed in the matter, answered,

THE POORER SIDE OF EGYPTIAN MUSLIMS.

saying, "Allah—may I be His sacrifice—has made this water sacred, as you know. It is neither sweet nor bitter, neither fresh nor salt, neither scented nor stinking, but would appear in its taste to be a mixture of all these qualities. In everything sacred there must be a mystery, or how could the mullás live?" As to its attributes, they may be counted by the hundred. There is no disease that it will not cure provided it be taken with a "pure" conscience. It is as inspiring to a Muslim poet as that of Helicon to an unbeliever. It prolongs life and purifies the soul of him that drinks it in unswerving obedience to God through the mediation of Muhammad. The rich pilgrims carried gold or silver flasks in which they poured the precious water, keeping it as a preservative of health, or as a remedy in case of sickness. An Indian Prince told me that he intended to keep his in order to restore the eyesight of his brother, who had been unable to accompany him on the pilgrimage. The Faithful bring their winding-sheets along with them and wash them in the holy spring. Some Negroes from Zanzibar have the honour to be the guardians of the well and the dispensers of its contents, and they exact as much as twenty piastres from the poor pilgrims for the washing of one of these winding-sheets, and ten times that amount from the rich.

Now, this practice of washing the grave-clothes stands in need of explanation. When a Muslim dies and is buried, he is received by a heavenly host, who gives him notice of the coming of the two examiners, Nakir and Monker. These are two angels as livid as death and as black as a putrid corpse, and they proceed to question him concerning his faith, more especially as to the unity of God and the apostleship of the Prophet. If he prove himself a true Mussulman, he is suffered to rest in peace and is refreshed by the air of Paradise. But, if he be of a loose belief, he is

gnawed and stung till the resurrection by ninety-nine dragons that have seven heads each, the earth pressing harder and harder on his body without, unfortunately, injuring the dragons. It is in order to escape from this torture that the pilgrims wash their winding-sheets, in the life-giving water of Zem-Zem, some of them taking the precaution to make assurance doubly certain by inscribing on the sheets, in coloured letters, the most sacred chapters of the Kurán. One of the pilgrims showed me a winding-sheet belonging to himself on which had been written in green ink every single chapter of the Book. The well is covered with a small square building crowned with a cupola and a crescent, and is paved inside with marble. There are four Chinese windlasses at the top of the shrine for drawing the water, and these were working all day long, the keepers having the greatest difficulty in restraining the ardour of the poor, tradition-ridden devouts, some of whom were wrought to such a pitch of blind fanaticism that it was as much as the Negroes could do to prevent them from flinging themselves into the well.

Since I had not the good fortune to win my way to the windlass, I took a jug of Zem-Zem water, making the attendant a present of ten piastres for it. Then, having performed the necessary ablutions, I went out by the old gate (on the thither side of the Place of Abraham) and ascended the stairs of Safá. We found the platform alive with pilgrims, and there, facing the Ka'bah, we had to pass in review all the blessings we had received from God during our lives, from the days of our birth upward. That done, we repeated seven times in an audible tone: "God is great. . . . I praise thee, O Lord! . . . There is no god but God. . . ." Three times: "There is no god but the one God; there is not anyone like unto Him. For His is the kingdom, and to Him do we lift up our praise. He is the giver of life

and the giver of death. Death and life He bestoweth on all living creatures, but He dieth not, neither doth He sleep. He is almighty over everything. . . ." Once: "O Lord, I praise Muhammad and his people." Three times: "I praise the Lord who endureth for ever, I praise the everlasting Lord." Three times: "I confess there is no god but God, and I confess likewise that Muhammad is His slave and His apostle. We worship Him whom we praise, and none but Him!" Then three times we cried: "O Lord, have mercy on me, and be compassionate to me, and give me justice in this world and in the world to come. . . . O Lord, give us Thy blessing in this life, and grant us Thy peace in the next, and protect us from the punishment of fire." Next, having repeated one hundred times the words "God is great; there is no god but God, and Him do I praise," I said aloud: "O Lord, I praise Thee in death and in what comes after death. In Thee, O God, do I seek shelter from the darkness of the grave, from the pressure of the grave, and the disturbance of the grave. Under the canopy of Thy divine compassion do I take refuge on the day when there is no shelter but Thy shelter." Then, in my inmost mind, I gave up to the Lord my faith, my person, and my people, crying: "I return to Thee, O Lord, Who alone art compassionate and merciful, my faith, myself, my people, my property, and my progeny. O Lord, make me to act according to Thy Book and the dictation of Thy apostle: make me faithful to Thy people, and protect me from revolution." As an increase of wealth, so says tradition, this prayer should also be read: "O Lord, I seek shelter in Thee from the punishments of the grave: from its troubles, and its separations, and its awe, and its percussion, and its blackness, and its closeness." Then, uncovering the back, one should raise the voice, crying out loud: "O Lord, pardon! O Thou who

hast commanded to pardon, O Thou who art the first to pardon—pardon, pardon, pardon, pardon! O Generous! O Compassionate! O Near! O Far! make me to achieve Thy satisfaction by acting in obedience unto Thee!" Then, descending from the platform, I said: "I persevere seven times in running between Safá and Marveh, and this I do in order to fulfil my pilgrimage and in obedience to the command of the Lord of the Universe."

The distance between the two hills is four hundred and thirty-eight yards. The course has to be traversed seven times. It begins at Safá and ends on the seventh lap at Marveh. Those who are too weak or too ill "to persevere" on foot must be carried on a horse, a camel, a mule, or a donkey, like the women, who, if sufficiently wealthy, are accompanied by three hired servants. The first, the forerunner, who clears the way, wears an expression of indescribable gravity. You can tell by his face that you have only to cast an eye behind him to behold a "Light of the Harem." The second, leading the beast by the bridle, looks religiously ahead, and the third brings up the rear, doing all in his power to protect his precious burden from the shrieking crowd. If a pilgrim at this stage of initiation allow his thoughts to dwell on the fair sex he must sacrifice a calf in the Valley of Mina. From the foot of Safá to the first minaret at the south-eastern end of the Harem the pilgrim must walk at his ease, and there he must say a prayer. It is this: "I begin in the name of God, and by God, and God is great. May peace be with Muhammad and with his household. O Lord, the compassionate and merciful, who art capable beyond my knowledge, O Thou who art most exalted and most generous, take this act of worship of mine, which is not worthy of Thee, and, enriching it with Thy abundance, make it more deserving of Thy acceptance. I offer up my 'perseverance' to Thee, O Lord,

and in Thee my hope and my strength are fixed. O Thou that acceptest the devotion of the pious, reject not my offering, O God." Thenceforward, until he reached the Baghleh Gate, some eighty yards away, the pilgrim had to suit his gait as far as in him lay to the rolling pace of a camel on the trot. He had now reached the starting point for hopping. Two big green flags were flying to give him warning. Up went the left leg of every mother's son and of many a father's daughter—for to every woman who rode there were twenty on foot—and a great deal of panting confusion and breathless excitement ensued. Hands were lifted to the sky, voices were raised in praise of God, asking for strength "to persevere," mules stampeded, horses lashed out with their heels, camels pierced their way through the surging mob as silently and as irresistibly as a ship breasts the sea, men and women being hurled aside like waves. The endurance displayed by the bare-footed devout was marvellous. They were buoyed by the assurance that they were supported by the angels, Gabriel being the captain of the guard.

Now shoved forward by the pilgrims in the rear, now carried back by those who were returning from Marveh, I hopped about in a vicious circle, groaning and perspiring, like a man bereft of his senses. Should I never reach the blessed Gate of Ali! Who said the distance was not more than seventy-five yards? Let him hop over the course and he will multiply its figures by ten at every step. The folly of it all seemed to crash down on the crown of my bare head, shattering my belief in human sanity. For, carried away by the obligation of imitating the "persevering" antics of my fellow-pilgrims, I found myself now hopping on one leg like a melancholy heron, and now, on reaching Ali's Gate, pitching and rolling and labouring along like a spent camel under a goad. Yá-Allah!

yá-Muhammad! I cut a sorry figure in my own estimation, no matter what merit I earned in the minds of my co-mates in affliction. So depressed was I that I had forgotten to say the prescribed prayer at the second minaret before reaching the Baghleh Gate: "O God, the possessor of praise and knowledge and mercy and magnanimity, pardon my trespasses, for, verily, there is no forgiver of sins but Thee alone." Many were maimed for life, not a few were killed, accident followed accident, but still the unheeding wave of pilgrims swept along over the fiery sand, shrieking and gesticulating, till my senses seemed to swoon. My guide, inured to the Arabian heat and to the unhallowed confusion of the course, performed his part with a studied dignity and a nimbleness of resource which added a touch of humour to an exhibition otherwise saddening. But these pilgrims themselves were tormented by no such self-accusing thoughts. If their feet were cut they had the consolation of believing that the streams of Paradise would wash them whole, for the cool water of Salsabíl and Tasním, if they succumbed to their devotional exertions, would it not be lifted to their parched lips by divine peris and everlasting life be theirs?

What might strike the spectator most of all would probably be the contrast presented by the dignity of the prayers and the occasional outbursts of religious extravagance on the part of the priest-ridden and ignorant among the pilgrims. The prayers might be read in any church in Christendom. The stormy outburst from all reserve could only be witnessed nowadays in the East, where religion, that ship of salvation, though seaworthy enough in its undeniable if narrow sincerity, is in constant danger of being wrecked in the breakers of fanaticism. Muhammad reverenced science. Several sayings have been already quoted in which it was rated by him at its true value. The

priests persist in disregarding its lessons from sheer self-interest. It is not the light of religion which they spread abroad. It is the fire of fanaticism which they fan—a fire which, by throwing out abundant heat but no light whatever, burns while diffusing darkness. "God does not change the condition of a people," said Muhammad, "until they change it for themselves." If these retrograde priests had kept themselves abreast of the times, as they were in duty bound to do as followers of a man of progressive genius, the crescent of Islám had been a well-nigh perfect round long ago. Enlightenment was not wanting on the part of a great number of laymen, as I shall show later on; but as to the greater number of the priests I met at Mecca, well, let us hope that, on ascending the platform of Marveh, they were conscious of falling short of the responsibilities of their office, and that they made amends by throwing into the prayer of repentance the burden of a contrite spirit: "O Lord, Thou that hast commanded to pardon; O Thou that lovest pardon; O Thou that grantest pardon; O Thou that forgivest with pardon; O Lord, pardon! pardon! pardon! pardon!" And if they could then weep out of the fulness of a heart ill at ease in its breast, and not perfunctorily as by law ordained, there might be some hope of their redemption. All joined in the concluding prayer, which runs: "O Lord, verily, I beseech Thee, in all circumstances, to endow me plentifully with tacit faith in Thee, and also to grant that I may be pure of intention in my resignation to Thy divine will."

PLAN OF THE HAREM.

An Explanation of the Frontispiece.

SM indicates the Salám Gate, through which the pilgrim must enter and where the course begins; AM, the Tomb of Abraham; BK, the Black Stone; K, the Ka'bah, or House of God; Z, the Fountain of Zem-Zem; SA, the Safá

Gate, through which the pilgrim passes out on his course; S, Safá, the platform on which one must walk and pray; BH, the Baghleh Gate, the starting-point for hopping; AI, the Ali Gate, the finishing place for hopping, but on the return journey the starting-point, with BH as its ending. M indicates Marveh, the platform on which the pilgrim must walk and pray. The distance for hopping—marked by two pointers at BH and AI—is some seventy-five yards, the dotted lines showing the Course of Perseverance, and the arrow-heads indicating its direction.

CHAPTER VI

SCENE IN AN EATING-HOUSE—VISIT TO THE KA'BAH

IT was two o'clock by the time we had completed the Course of Perseverance, and, since we had broken our fast at an early hour in the morning, we betook ourselves in a mighty hurry to the eating-house of Stád Mukhtar, the Effendi pastrycook of Mecca. The caravan we had left behind us at Heddah, swollen beyond recognition on the journey up, had just arrived, and Mussah-street was in a veritable delirium of excitement. It was dry and blazing weather, with a glow as of a furnace in the air, and the passing of the caravan, with its streaming banners, its jaded camels, and its betousled pilgrims, added to the poignance of our hunger by delaying the hour that should see it satisfied. Only one glimpse we took of the medley of men and beasts. As we raised our eyes we saw, securely strapped on an ambling mule, a man of lofty mien, albeit distressingly wasted, with streaming white beard and hair, and the face of a corpse for tense impassivity. His eyes, deep sunk and expressionless, met mine. He at once raised his voice —and never shall I forget the eerie exaltation ringing in its tones—and cried aloud: "Praise be to God on high, who hath brought me alive into His house. Blessed is he who dieth in the house of the Lord. May He be praised and glorified!" And from the crowd there arose a shout, that

passed from lip to lip in a fervour of congratulation: "May it be auspicious. . . . May your eyes be lightened. . . . May your years be increased. . . . May your shadow never grow less. . . . Yá—Allah! . . . Yá—Muhammad!" The grim fortitude of that towering wraith of a man on the nimble-footed mule stirred in his co-religionists I know not what feelings of awe and gratification. For pity there was no room in their breasts; envy there might have been, but of a sort whereof heroism is engendered; not one among them but had wished to be in the place of him who, supported by faith and guided by death, had won the crown of self-martyrdom. In a moment the man was gone past.

"Islám," said Seyyid 'Alí, "see how brightly it burns in a grate worthy to contain the sacred fire. That man's zeal has made me rich in faith. I tell you that the stars of heaven were a mean decoration for a zealot so long-suffering and sincere. But come, Yá-Moulai, let us break our fast in the famous eating-house of Stád Mukhtar. Behold, the entrance awaits our coming, for the door is open."

On crossing the threshold we uttered a loud salám, looking up into the air the while. Then we stepped inside, for, as the Persians say, if you wish to escape reproof you must assume the same "colour" as your company. The shop was oblong, measuring some 24ft. by 9ft., at a guess. Rough stools and low black erections on four legs took the place of chairs and tables. I counted no less than sixty pilgrims engaged in eating. It would have been impossible to count the beggars who came crowding in. These I brushed unceremoniously aside, much to the annoyance of one of them, who cried out in vulgar Arabic: "May your meal not sit well on you! How can you eat while we are starving here?" Compassion laid its hand in mine, and I would have given the petitioner a present, ungracious though he was, had not Seyyid 'Alí restrained me, saying:

MUSSAH STREET AT MECCA.

PUTTING ON IHRÁM AT JIDDAH.

"Yá-Moulai, do not judge our friend by his looks. His appearance, I grant, is poverty-stricken beyond the power of repletion, but, you may take my word for it, his wealth underground surpasses the dreams of this slave of yours." In this opinion he was supported by the pilgrims inside, who assured me that the residential beggars of Mecca are often extremely rich and in the habit of burying the money they wring from the credulity or the generosity of the strangers within the gates. The din in the eating-house was beyond belief. Everybody spoke at once, and at the top of his voice. A pack of children fresh from school would give you an idea of the uproar. The first questions the pilgrims asked of one another were their names, their nationalities, their professions, and their family pedigrees. Around one of the diminutive tables were seated two men, and, as there were a couple of vacant stools, I took one of them, my guide, as a mark of respect, sitting down on my left. Shortly after another pilgrim came in, and, picking up a stool, wedged himself between Seyyid 'Alí and myself, muttering a half-reluctant "Bismillah!" The gentleman directly facing me was a Turkish Effendi, Mahmud Bey by name. Like the majority of the inmates, he was clad in íhram, but his face singled itself out by virtue of its stony reserve. On the extreme right was a Persian Mirza, called Zainul-Abedin, whose countenance prepared me for the authoritative unction of his speech. A stalwart Afghan sat on my guide's left hand, while the intruder, who had separated us, was a native of Hyderabad, Deccan. His name was Abdul Saleh.

The Persian Mirza was the first to break the silence. Looking at each of us in turn he said, in his mellowest tones: "Bah! Bah! Khúsh amedid! You are welcome. You have brought purity into the City of God."

"And so have you," was 'Alí's affable response. "I

was the essence of impurity when I left my native town of Ardebil to perform this holy pilgrimage; but I trust that God may purify my conscience." The guide changed his birthplace with his company. "Do you come from Ardebil, my friend?" said Abdul Saleh. "Many learned people have come from that blessed city. The poet calls it the House of Knowledge."

Seyyid 'Alí smiled a sarcastic smile. "Even the learned, my good brother of Hindustan," quoth he, "are prisoners within the limits of the knowable, so fear not to inform the company wherein the fame of Ardebil consists." My guide referred to the fact that the place he had chosen as his native town is the convict station of Persia.

"God forbid!" replied Abdul Saleh, courteously, "for the tact that is yours shows the poet to have been right. The abode of learning must count you among its most honoured citizens." These amenities put the whole table in a good temper, and Seyyid 'Alí was not long in summoning the waiter, Omar, who, having informed us that his master, Stád Mukhtar, had gone to Mina in order to open a branch establishment there, awaited our orders in an attitude so free and easy that Mahmud Bey, frowning ever so slightly, grew a degree more reserved than ever. The waiter wore a fez with a streaming tassel, a long white robe, and a bright silk sash, from which hung an apron that had once been white. The dishes we ordered were a ghormeh of camel's flesh roasted in onions; a kúfteh, or mincemeat, served with rice and seasoned with spices; a lamb kebab on a skewer folded in a sheet of bread fresh from the oven; and a sweet called mehlabi, which looked like English jelly. Omar, placing his right hand to his ear, like a muezzin bugling out the cry of the Faith, shouted out at the top of his voice to the cook in the adjoining kitchen: "Ghormeh! Kúfteh! Kebab! Melabi! Eikki!" then,

seeing that his cigarette was gone out, he asked me to provide him with a match, which was given to him by my guide, who did not share Mahmud Bey's ill-disguised disapproval of the waiter's demeanour. The Turk, raising his eyes to mine, said across the table: "Effendim, the waiters of Stambul have better manners—however." A contemptuous shrug of the shoulders completed the sentence. The speaker addressed me in his own language, though he was a good Arabic scholar; but a political discussion which followed a question of mine as to whether Abdul Saleh approved or disapproved of the British rule in India was held in Arabic.

"The poet says: 'The essence of human enjoyment is the belly,'" said my guide, "so let us enjoy ourselves in a human fashion."

"What will you say," objected Masoud, "if I assure you that the poet means the spiritual belly and not the bodily one?"

"This," replied Seyyid 'Alí, quickly, "that there was once a Dervish whose mysticism had so clouded his understanding that he interpreted the writings of Omar Khayyam as you would have me interpret them. The drinking of wine, according to him, was meant to symbolise the adoration of God. Now, it chanced that the dervish broke the law, and was brought before his Governor, who sentenced him 'to eat five hundred sticks.' The farrashes, fortified by the juice of the grape, laid on with a will. It was heart-rending to hear the shrieks of the sufferer. His philosophy deserted him, so that he yelled for mercy. The minions of the law appealed to the Governor, who said to the dervish: 'Have no fear, they are merely spiritual sticks. You must eat them every one. May they go down well with you.' Are you answered?"

"Blessed be Islám. Long live the Caliphs of the

Faith!" cried Abdul Saleh, as though he had just awoke from sleep.

"And long live the Ameers!" said Masoud, in a frenzy of patriotism. "May the soul of Abdur Rahman Khan, the conqueror of Kafiristan, the light of the nation and religion, rest in peace, and may the sword of Islám grow sharper day by day."

"The sword of Islám is sharp enough," cried Seyyid 'Alí "but it requires men to use it, as in the age of the blessed Caliphs."

"What do you mean by that?" said the Persian Mirza, in anger. "Do you think we have no men in Persia? May God keep stiff the neck of Iran. One man of Iran is worth fifty foreign unbelievers."

"Particularly if they come from Káshán and Isfahán," added the guide, sarcastically, referring to the alleged lack of courage in the inhabitants of those two towns.

"May your heart be cleansed," cried the Mirza. "Your sarcasm, I take it, is aimed at the authorities, that enlist so few soldiers from the southern provinces, and scarce a single man from the towns you mention."

The Turk looked surprised. "Do you mean to say that Isfahán and Káshán do not contribute to the strength of the Persian Nizam?" he asked. "How, then, can Persia defend herself against aggression?"

"You do not know, my good friend," replied the Mirza, "what the Persians can do. We have no cause to fear any foreign invasion."

"Certainly not," said the Afghan, with the tongue in his cheek, dreaming no doubt of the sacking of Isfahán by his countrymen.

"If you will have patience," said the guide, "I will tell you the circumstances that led the authorities, whereon the sun of the Faith shines, to abandon the

AN EGYPTIAN COFFEE-HOUSE FREQUENTED BY THE POOR.

practice of enrolling recruits from Káshán and Isfahán."

We had now finished our meal and were drinking coffee and smoking hukkahs, and so we lent a willing ear to the sceptical rogue, who proceeded thus:

"Early in the reign of the late martyred Shah-in-Shah —may peace be on his soul—the late Amin-ud-dowleh of Káshán assumed the reins of government, and when that came to pass his fellow-citizens implored him to free them from the obligation of serving in the Army. The Minister laid before them a plan whereby they might achieve the end they had in view. Now you must know that Teherán is a mighty capital, and if any one of you doubt the fact let him go there at midday and listen to the booming of the great gun, which shatters the buildings round about, laying whole streets in ruins. Well, one day, when the Shah-in-Shah was driving through the parade square, he saw a squad of Kásháni soldiers weeping over a dead comrade. His Majesty, having made inquiries, was informed that the brave Kásháni had died from the fright caused by the sound of the midday gun. Then the Shah, bursting out laughing, disbanded the whole regiment, giving strict orders to discontinue the enlistment of soldiers from Káshán."

"Why don't you finish the story, my friend?" asked the Mirza. "The sting lies in the tail thereof. For when the regiment was disbanded the soldiers asked for a Cavalry escort to conduct them safely home." A roar of laughter followed.

"As for the non-enlistment of soldiers from Isfahán," resumed the Mirza, "take this story from me as its true cause. The soldiers of the Isfahán regiment had not received any pay for a long time, and so they waylaid his Majesty one day when he was driving to the shrine of Shah Abdul Azim and asked him to give them relief. The Secretary for

War, fearing revelations and the consequences, approached his Majesty and told him that the soldiers had rebelled in connection with the cursed Bábí Rebellion. The late Shah returned to the Palace at once, and had fourteen of the soldiers executed, and then started on a trip to the hills. When he came back it was to discover the mistake he had made, and, as an act of repentance, he absolved the town from the yoke of soldiery."

The Turk, Mahmud Bey, rose and made to leave the eating-house. Looking the Persian Mirza in the eyes, he said: "My friend, it is better to be seated in a corner, deaf and dumb, than to have a tongue that is not under one's control. I have the honour to bid you good-bye." My guide and I followed him, leaving the others to digest his admonition at their leisure, and bent our steps once more in the direction of the Harem for the purpose of visiting the interior of the House of God.

The gate of the House, except on certain occasions, is kept shut. It is opened for men on the tenth day of the month of Muharram, and for women on the following day. During each of the months of Rabíu-'l-avval, Rajab, and Ramazán (the Muhammadan Lent) admittance is granted on two occasions to the devout, who are again free to cross the sacred threshold once in the month of Sha'ban. On the twelfth day of Rabíu-'l-avval prayers are offered by the high priest of Mecca, within the Ka'bah, for the health of his Majesty the Sultan. This ceremony is a private one. The open sesame to the house, in the days of pilgrimage, is the seductive jingle of gold. An influential Hájí, by means of *bakhshísh*, can effect an entrance whenever he likes, but his poverty-stricken fellow-pilgrims are not granted the same privilege. Twice every year the house is ceremoniously cleaned and washed. When that happens it is incumbent on the Sheríf, the Governor-General of Hejaz, the head

priest, the keepers, and the priestly officials to be present, after they have performed the prescribed purifications and ablutions of the body. The first annual cleaning takes place on the twentieth day of Rabíu-'l-avval. First the floor of the house is scrubbed with the water from the Zem-Zem well, then the walls are besprinkled with ottar of roses and other fragrant scents. Aloe-wood is kindled in braziers, and spreads its delicious perfume through the air. The officials prostrate themselves twice in prayer, after which they withdraw. The second cleaning of the year is effected in the same fashion on the twentieth day of Zi-ka'd, preparatory to the ceremony of draping the outer walls of the house with ihrám. For, thirteen days before the Hájj-day, the Ka'bah itself is clothed in the winding-sheet of humility, as though it were regarded unworthy to be called the House of God.

This ihrám of the shrine consists of a soft white material manufactured in Yemen, and is hung on the outer walls to the height of seven feet from the ground. One of the most interesting sights is the selling of this stuff to the richer pilgrims by the keepers of the Ka'bah. A square inch of it will often fetch as much as £3. The purchaser considers it his most cherished possession. The mere touch of it is held to cure every sickness. The sight of it is enough to protect its owner from the evil eye. So long as he has it about him Satan will practise his snares on him in vain. Thousands of miracles are believed to be wrought by its use. "So-and-So is a lucky man," one devout will say to another, "he has obtained through God's grace a strip of the ihrám of the Blessed Ka'bah." The chief door-keeper of the present day goes by the name of Sheykh Shaban. The post is a coveted one, and has become hereditary of recent years. On the Hájj-day the ihrám is taken down, and is replaced by the kesveh, which is composed of eight pieces of

black silk, embroidered round the margins with Kurán texts in letters of gold, and of a curtain of the same design and colour. Two of these pieces of silk go to cover each one of the outer walls. They are hung from the corners on long silver loops. The curtain is used to drape the silver-plated door, and falls to the ground from a rod of solid silver beautifully chased.

The "Square House," or Ka'bah, stands almost in the centre of the Harem, rather nearer to the west than to the east. The ground whereon it lies is accounted holy, since it was here that Adam, after his expulsion from the Garden of Eden, first worshipped his Creator, a tent being sent down from heaven for the purpose. This act of grace on the part of the heavenly hosts was the compassionate result of a conference over which the Archangel Gabriel had presided. There was substituted for the tent by Adam's son Seth a structure of clay and stone which was rebuilt at a later period, under the superintendence of Abraham and Ishmael his son. So much for the legendary history of the house. The task of restoring the sacred edifice, in the time of Ignorance, fell to the lot of the four chief tribes of Arabia. It was rebuilt by the Kuraish, a few years after Muhammad's birth, and was destroyed by the torrents thirty-five years after its completion. Then ensued an intertribal war, each of the clans claiming for itself a complete side of the house which should face its tents, till the cause of strife was settled by an agreement among the contending tribes to accept the arbitration of Abú-Amid, the chief of the Kuraish. The decision of Abú-Amid was that the tribes should abide by the determination of the man who, on the following Friday afternoon, should be the first to leave the mosque. So haphazard an arrangement was bound to appeal to the sportsmanlike instinct of a race that has been ever wont to test the wisdom of its

actions by the arbitrament of chance. The warriors sheathed their swords, and when the fateful day arrived not a single murmur was raised against the man who, being the first to reach the open air, set about planning the building as it now appears. This man, it is said, was Muhammad. The Ka'bah, which was certainly reconstructed in the year 1627—the successive Sherífs and Sultans adding to its interior decoration—is said to have been destroyed and restored twelve times since the death of the Prophet.

In shape the Ka'bah is an almost solid square, having from outside a length of fourteen yards, and being eleven yards broad and sixteen yards high. From afar it has the look of an immense block of dark-coloured granite. The double roof is supported from within by pillars of aloe-wood, and is held in so great reverence by the devout that it is declared by them never to have been polluted by the Harem pigeons until recently, the present misbehaviour on the part of the birds being taken as a sign of the approaching end of the world. The gateway, which fills a considerable portion of the eastern wall, is raised about six feet from the ground, and measures in height some four yards, as far as I could gauge. The door itself is made of aloe-wood, and is covered over with plates of solid silver, and studded with heavy silver nails. The precious metal was presented to the house, in 959 of the Hegira, by the generous Sultan Suleymán. Inlaid in the eastern end of the southern wall of the Ka'bah is the famous Black Stone which might be said to be the centre of the pilgrims' circling aspirations, and the pivot of their circumambulations round the sacred precincts. Another stone, marking the Sepulchre of Ishmael, lies at the base of the northern wall, and from the roof above there projects a horizontal semicircular rainspout, which, including the end fixed in the wall, is five yards long, measures twenty-four inches in width, and is made of

massive gold. The water flows from the lip of the split pipe to the floor of the Harem below. The tomb of Abraham, the legendary builder of the temple, is situated close by, to the east, not far from the Gate of Beni Shaibeh.

The Prophet's faithful followers, when they say their prayers, must turn their faces in the direction of the Ka'bah, no matter where they may be. This ascertaining of the exact position of the House of God, which is the centre of the Holy City, is called "taking the Kiblah or Outlook." Thus the Muhammadans of Syria, and those beyond it to the north, having fixed the Kiblah, are face to face with the northern wall, sacred to the Stone of Ishmael and the gold rainspout: their prayers are therefore sure to be heard. Those of Persia, Turkistan, Northern India, Sind, and a part of China, look in the direction of the north-eastern angle, called the Rokné-Araghi, which is an equally blessed outlook, since the door of the house is on the eastern side and rather more to the north than the south thereof. The faces of the Muslims of Aden, of Southern India, of Madagascar, and of Australia, are turned to the eastern wall or the south-eastern corner of it, while those of the faithful of Constantinople, as well as those of the Muhammadans of some parts of Russia, are opposite to the western wall of the sacred building. The Boers believed themselves to be the "chosen people." It is a pity they are not Muhammadans. For, if they were, they would be considered now the chosen people of Islám for the simple reason that they would face the southern wall of the Ka'bah, wherein is laid the Black Stone of immemorial sanctity. But the prayers the most acceptable to God, when all is said and done, are the prayers raised from any quarter within the Harem of the House of Allah on earth.

The interior of the Ka'bah is far more impressive than

the exterior. The silver threshold is reached by means of a staircase running on wheels. There the pilgrim must prostrate himself, asking God to grant him his heart's desire. He must be careful to maintain the correct demeanour, closing his eyes and lifting up his hands, inasmuch as the angels, who are believed to keep watch over the entrance, are quick to resent the slightest breach in the prescribed ceremony. The guide who accompanied me assured me of the fact. He was good enough to see that I had forgotten neither my rosary of ninety-nine beads corresponding with the wondrous names of God used in prayer, nor yet the lump of clay (called mohre) whereon are stamped the selfsame names, together with those of the twelve Imáms and the Prophet. It was on the clay that I bowed my head in contrition when I fell on my knees. My guide, who had also prostrated himself, expressed the conviction, on rising, that the angels were on his side. I was also about to declare myself to be on the side of the angels when a couple of sturdy pilgrims, in their impatience to behold the Light of their eyes, wedged me tight between their bulky forms and then hustled me to the ground, adding insult to injury by being obviously unconscious of the presence of my humble body. They were "absent-minded beggars" with a vengeance. I can only say that, on regaining my feet, I hoped the silent prayer I said, on the spur of my annoyance, would be answered ere long; but when I crossed the doorsill I was overcome by a sense of my own unworthiness, so that I pardoned the men who had offended me. I raised my eyes. The ceiling was flat, and supported on three columns of aloe-wood, and from it hung vases of great beauty on delicate gold chains. The walls were covered with red velvet, save where, in white squares, were written, in Arabic characters, the words "Allah-Jal-

Jelalah! (Praise to God the Almighty!)" The velvet is said to have been a gift from Sultan Abdul Aziz. In the corner formed by the northern and eastern walls there is a door leading to the roof. This door, which is called the Door of Repentance, is closed to the public; but a prayer said on the hither side of the threshold meets with a gracious response, and the pilgrim is clean-washed of his sins if he but touch the wood with his hand. The floor is now flagged with marble—the work of some twenty years ago.

While I was admiring the unpretentious grace of the holy shrine, and meditating from its threshold on the golden age of Islám, my guide broke in on my thoughts, saying: "You are allowed to make two prostrations at the base of any one of the pillars. Let me advise you, in the welfare of your immortal soul, to choose the one facing the Black Stone outside, which is the most sacred spot under the canopy of heaven." The difficulty was to force my way thither. The whole house was packed with pilgrims. Some were praying, some were weeping, others were groaning or beating their chests, and all—except the Bedouins—were clad in their sacred habits. A great awe fell on me. It was as though the graves had yielded up their dead at the blast of Israfil's trumpet. All eyes were blind, all ears deaf. The thought of home, of country, of wife and child seemed drowned as in a sea of passionate devotion to the Creator of those human blessings. And from outside, in the Harem, there arose the chant of the Talbih, which every pilgrim must sing on sighting Mecca, on donning the Ihrám, on entering the Harem, on starting for the Valley of Desire and the Mountain of Compassion, and on performing the little pilgrimage of Omreh. I paused in the effort to reach the southern pillar, and listened to the singing from without.

Labbaik, Allahomma, Labbaik !
Labbaik, la Sherika lak Labbaik !
Labbaik, enal-hamda, Vanahmeta lak Labbaik !
Labbaik, la Sherika lak Labbaik !

(Verily, here am I ! O Allah, here I am !
Verily, here am I ! O Allah, thou hast no mate !
Verily, here am I, O Allah ! All praise and glory to thee !
Verily, here am I ! O Allah, thou hast no mate !)

On my soul, it was fine ! All my senses must have deserted me. I must have lost all consciousness of self suddenly. The burden of existence seemed to be lifted. If I did not actually slip off the slough of the flesh I came to realise in a flash that the soul is immortal. These introspective thoughts were not mine at the moment of the transformation. They were retrospective, forced on me, when, on coming back to a sense of my surroundings, I found myself kneeling at the Door of Repentance, and heard myself crying "Labbaik, la Sherika lak Labbaik." Yes ; there was I—"an Agnostic who would like to know" —rubbing my brow on the marble floor of the Ka'bah, without the dimmest notion in my mind as to how I came to be there. Only a month before I had been sipping lemon squash in a London restaurant. Strange. The first thing I did was to look round in search of my guide, as sceptical a rascal as ever breathed. He was on his knees, at my side, his eyes starting out of the sockets. I put my hand on his shoulder. "Come," I said, "let us go out. I'm suffocating." He rose to his feet, looking scared and abashed ; but his face assumed its usual expression of sunny mirth on reaching the Harem. He put his tongue in his cheek as of yore ; then, repenting him of his unregenerate mood, he told the truth. "Yá-Moulai (Oh, sir)," said he, "within the house so great reverence fell on me that I did hardly think of the blessed hourís and perís pro-

mised to me in Paradise. The same emotion overmasters me every year on entering into the Ka'bah of Allah, and yet what does it all mean? What is the value of this dream which we call life, and which is my true self? Is it the self that inquires, scoffs, doubts, but wants to find truth? Or is it the self that you discovered a moment ago bereft of every sense save one, namely, that which would seem to have drawn me irresistibly to a power whose will none would seem able to dispute? Has that power an existence outside my emotions, or is it merely the fabric of my senses? You are silent, Yá-Moulai. Well, there are more ways of getting drunk than by drinking of the juice of the forbidden fruit. I escaped from myself just then on a spiritual rather than a spirituous fluid. Let us return to our camp."

CHAPTER VII

ON THE ROAD TO ARAFAT

THE most important days of the Pilgrimage are the 8th, 9th, and 10th of the moon of Zú-'l-hijjah. Now, the 8th of Zú-'l-hijjah is the day of the Repose of the Soul. In Arabic it is called Youm-ul-Tarvih, and it sees the exodus of the pilgrims from Mecca on their way to the Hill of Arafat. The most noteworthy "column" of the Hájj is the sermon which is preached on the mount on the following day. No pilgrim is qualified to call himself Hájí unless he is present on that occasion. The preacher sits on a camel, and the pilgrims gather round him, those who can find no room on the slopes taking up their positions on the plain. Not ten pilgrims in a hundred can hear a word, and so the majority while away the time in praying, in weeping, in chatting, in telling stories, and even in making love. If they fall asleep or lose consciousness they are counted as absent. They must arrive before noon and must remain until after sunset. If they leave before the appointed time they must pay forfeit either by sacrificing a camel or else by keeping fast for eighteen days running. This day is named Youm-ul-Arafat in Arabic.

The pilgrims, before reaching the plain of Arafat, must perform their religious purifications, and, on arriving on the Hill itself, they must recite the following Niyyat: "O God, I purpose, in obedience to Thy commands, to abide here

until the setting of the sun." With this they must say aloud a prayer which runs: "I praise Thee, I glorify Thee, O Lord; there is no God but Thee. I have burdened my conscience with wrongdoing, and now acknowledge my sins. O, forgive me my trespasses, O Lord, for, verily, Thou art the best forgiver." Nor is this all; for the pilgrims, having declared their intention and confessed their sins, must pray for their parents, their relatives, their co-religionists, their servants, and their slaves. The number of persons thus honoured in the remembrance should not be less than forty; and for this act of grace the pilgrims will be rewarded one hundred thousandfold. Furthermore, in the course of the day what we have called the Song of the Winding-sheet or Talbih must be repeatedly intoned, as must also the Tamjid or hymn of praise, and the glorification of God's omnipotence, which is styled Takbir. Then, when the sun is setting, the pilgrims turn their faces in the direction of the Ka'bah and recite this prayer: "I take refuge in Thee, O Lord, from poverty, and from the evil that may come out of the day or the night; I repent of all my wicked deeds, trusting in Thy gracious pardon; and I seek shelter from fear in Thy protection: O Lord, I repent, I repent, I repent." The second "column" of the Hájj takes place immediately after sunset, when the pilgrims rush forward impetuously from Arafat to Muzdalifah, in order to remember God near the holy monument (in Arabic, al Masher al harám), where, on a mountain on the thither side of Muzdalifah, the Prophet is said to have stood praying until his face shone as one who had seen his Lord. There the pilgrims pass the night, and at the hour of morning prayer they say: "O Lord, in obedience to Thy commands, I break my morning at Thy Masher al harám." Thence they proceed to Mina, through which valley they passed on their road to Arafat, and there the stoning of the devil and

the slaying of the sacrifices, two notable "columns" of the pilgrimage, are performed. This is the Youm-ul-Nahre or Day of Sacrifice.

On the eve of Youm-ul-Tarvih my friends and I went to stay the night with a Persian grandee who had taken up his lodgings in a large house near the Harem. We will call his name Ardashir Morad Khan. His was in many respects an exceptional character. He had acquired a knowledge of the French tongue without learning to detest the French nation, and had studied the Darwinian theory of the origin of species without aping the European. His conversation was grave and impersonal. He was communicative without being confidential. He never betrayed a trust, nor blabbed his personal secrets. From him I learned all I know of the political situation in Persia; and the Youm-ul-Tarvih was six hours gone—remember, in the East, the day begins and ends with the setting of the sun—ere we closed the debate and flung ourselves down to rest. Morning broke. Ardashir Morad Khan, having performed his ablutions, was saying his prayers, and I was drinking a cup of tea when there came a knock at the door, and a Persian friend of ours rushed into the room. His excitement knew no bounds. He stood bereft of speech from sheer lack of breath; but his face spoke volumes.

"Well, Sheykh Eissa," said I, "what is the news?"

"Ardashir Morad Khan dropped his rosary and looked up, listening. Sheykh Eissa coughed as if to clear his gorge, and cried—

"My manuscript on the Bedouins is lost; the precious volume has been stolen! For the last seventeen years, as I told you yesterday, I have wandered from tribe to tribe as a talismanmonger in order that I might study the customs and the character of the Bedouins, and give to the world a faithful history of my experiences. I had pro-

mised to show you the result of my labour, and now I am constrained by fate to re-shape my impressions. Youm-ul-Tarvih? Wáh! How can my soul repose?"

I handed the rebellious little man a cup of tea. Having taken a sip, he reached out for the sugar. "Your tea is as bitter as mortality," he said, and straightway converted it into syrup. I recalled a pretty Persian story. "Perhaps," I replied, "the clay from which the cup was made was once man." The fancy, though borrowed, restored the Sheykh's good humour. "It is the burned clay of my thief's grandfather," he declared, with a quaint uplifting of his shaggy eyebrows, "or I am an infidel. My precious manuscript—how can to-day be Youm-ul-Tarvih? Assuredly it is the Day of Sacrifice." Seyyid 'Alí now entered the room. He said: "I have engaged a *moghavem*, what we Persians call a *hamlehdar;* he will be here with his mules and camels at midday; and our tents are even now on their way to the Hill of Arafat, where an aristocratic position has been reserved for them."

"Surely you mean the Valley of Mina?" I asked. "No, no," broke in our host, Ardashir Morad Khan; "the custom of sleeping at Mina on the outward journey was abolished long ago on account of the delay its observance occasioned, and that for no purpose that would warrant——"

Sheykh Eissa leaped to his feet. "I ask pardon of God," he cried. "Why, the Prophet himself was accustomed to halt at Mina from six hours after sunrise on Youm-ul-Tarvih until sunrise next morning, and there he used to say the five prescribed prayers. Surely that fact alone would warrant our observance of the law?"

"Well," I replied, "I must confess that I am delighted to know that we shall have more roomy quarters for the night. The Valley of Mina is a mere gully. According

to my calculation there must be scarcely less than three hundred thousand pilgrims in this city."

"Say four hundred thousand and you will not exaggerate the number," interrupted our host. "What is your opinion, Skeykh Eissa?"

"The pilgrims are innumerable this year, your Excellency. It is not possible to count them. The angels in heaven are not more numerous. Nine years ago the pilgrims outnumbered the present calculation of our distinguished friend. This year Youm-ul-Nahre falls on a Friday, and I am sure there never was before a concourse so great in the City of God."

"I admire the beauty of your flight, Sheykh Eissa," I said, dryly. "But let us deal with facts. I came here by the last pilgrim boat. Some two hundred thousand passports had then been handed in at Jiddah by the seafaring pilgrims. Do you mean to say that the number of Hájís who have crossed the desert are equal to the number of those who have crossed the seas from every corner of the Muslim world? I will never believe it. The advantages are all in favour of the oversea route. It is cheaper, it is quicker, it is safer, and it is perhaps less tedious. For a fare of a few dollars any starveling can go by steamer from Suez to Jiddah. The result is that the old caravan routes with the one exception of the Syrian are, comparatively speaking, deserted. For instance, the Muslims of Morocco and North Africa are now conveyed to Mecca by sea. The contingent sent by Persia down the Gulf outnumbers that which journeys across Arabia. True, the Syrian caravan still maintains not a little of its ancient glory. This year it is unusually gigantic, containing as it does, in my opinion, not less than seventeen thousand camels. The Bedouins are also, I admit, in force; so let us say there are two hundred and fifty thousand pilgrims in Mecca all told. We

shall have a better opportunity of testing the accuracy of the figures when we are encamped on the Plain of Arafat. But be the number what it may, it is, at the lowest estimate, far too great for me not to congratulate myself that the custom of sleeping overnight in that death-trap of Mina has been done away with."

Sheykh Eissa smiled. "It would be impossible to extol its charms as a camping-ground. But I, for one, remember that, though the halt on the outward journey has been abolished, there we must stay for three or at the least for two days after slaying the sacrifices. For the rest, I am far from sharing your love of the oversea route from the outlying dominions of the Prophet. In my youth I travelled by caravan from Morocco to Medina and thence to this holy city. Along the northern coast of Africa, through Algeria, Tunis, and Tripoli, to the Land of Pyramids, we wandered, halting for one day in every six days in order that our camels might gather strength to sustain the hardships of the road; and in Cairo we joined the Egyptian caravan, whence we proceeded together on our way—an endless string of pilgrims, glorying in our liberty, praising God for His gifts of heaven and earth, burying our dead where they fell—now in the Sinaitic Peninsula, and now in the desert to the south, until we reached at last the sepulchre of the Prophet and the place of his birth. I deny not that God created the sea as well as the desert. Nay, nay, spare your eloquence. My stomach at sea is as inconstant as the waters. I am a Bedouin at heart. However, you must stay at Mina for three or for two days after the Day of Sacrifice."

"If the cholera fiend should not drive us hence in search of refuge," I interpolated. "The epidemic is on the increase. The sacrifices slain, we shall be only too glad to make good our escape to the sea."

"True," said Seyyid 'Alí, grimly, "if the cholera fiend should not choose for us an underground route to a city of eternal rest! If it please God, I shall conduct your Excellency to Jiddah so soon as the sun shall set on Youm-ul-Nahre. For I have no wish to fall a victim to the fell disease, Sheykh Eissa."

With the foregoing words my guide bade us good-bye and went about his business in my service. He came back, however, almost immediately. "May it please your Excellency," he said, addressing Ardashir Morad Khan, "Khalil is fallen sick of the cholera and is even now at the point of death." Now, Khalil was our host's steward and had set out for the Hill of Arafat in charge of the tents and baggage. Ardashir Morad Khan looked extremely grave. "God have mercy on his soul!" he cried. Then, "Where is he now?" he asked; "and who has taken his place?" Seyyid 'Alí replied that the man had been brought back on a bier to Mecca, and was then lying in a cellar attached to the kitchen of the house in which we were. A panic would have followed this statement had not our host cried out in a voice of sternest command: "I must request you all to be calm. We must set the servants an example of courage. Are we not the slaves of God? . . . Well, Seyyid 'Alí, who has taken over the control of our caravan?" "The cook of your Excellency's household," replied my guide, "assumed the direction of affairs. I have done my best to restore the confidence of your Excellency's household. The servants need a firm hand to keep them from running away."

So Ardashir Morad Khan left the room, and when he came back I requested permission to see the sick man. The other guests, who were sitting round the room with their backs to the walls, jumped up at once and made a low bow to me as I passed by to the servant's quarters.

The Meccan houses are generally lower than the surface of the street without, and when this is the case a flight of stone steps leads from the first floor into the court round which the apartments range. I found Khalil in the cellar. He was sinking fast. Nobody had dared to stay with him. His eyes were dried up in the sockets and blackened all round the rims. Not an ounce of flesh remained on his body. The stench was unendurable. The bearers, having stretched his legs in the direction of the Ka'bah and given him a cup of sour milk wherewith to quench his thirst, had gone away, leaving him a prey to the fell disease. Compassion rent my heart, but I could do nothing: remedy I had none. I saw, moreover, that he was too far gone to recover, and, indeed, scarcely was he aware of my presence than his new-born hope was strangled by death. "Yá—Allah!" he muttered, and that was the last time he drew breath. Having rejoined my host, I went with him into the city.

The streets were packed with camels, brought in thousands by the Bedouins and by the Syrian and the Egyptian drivers. Round about the Harem the *moghavems* tried our endurance to the utmost. These are the men who conduct the pilgrims by camel caravan to the Hill of Arafat and back, supplying all their needs on the journey. There is no fixed price for the hiring of a camel, but by dint of persistent bargaining it is possible to get one for five shillings, and each *moghavem* may have as many as fifty pilgrims under him. We were tormented by these contractors more than I had ever been tormented by the Indian jugglers outside the gates of any hotel in Bombay. They were as plentiful as flies in Egypt and not less irritating. Perhaps that is the fault of the pilgrims themselves. They begin by feigning indifference, and when they have reduced the *moghavems* to a haughty silence they assume

an air of eager business. Thus the *moghavems* have learned from experience never to take no for an answer.

Out of the madding crowd the talk was all of the cholera epidemic. On my way to a coffee-house I happened to meet a Turkish official, an acquaintance of mine, and he gave it as his conviction that the death-rate had risen to over five hundred victims a day. He advised me to leave the Valley of Mina at sunset on the tenth of the moon. In the coffee-house a Syrian pilgrim entered into conversation with me. He told many stories of his pilgrimage across the desert: of the discomforts and the perils of the road, of the cruelties of the drivers, and the almost inconceivable presumption of his own *moghavem*. With the immense caravan had come the Syrian Mahmil, in the charge of a Pasha, and the Surreh, in the care of another Turkish dignitary. This Surreh is the pension sent from Constantinople to the officials of the Harem. It was formerly the accumulated hoard of centuries of legacies. It is now managed by the Imperial Treasury. A strong force of cavalry accompanied the caravan, which, according to the pilgrim in question, counted some eighteen thousand camels.

The number stated was, perhaps, an exaggeration, though a pardonable one, for the string which I saw on reaching the Plain of Sheykh Mahmud, where the caravan had been encamped, and which was now on the move, extended for miles and miles. I determined then and there to avoid the crush on the road by remaining in Mecca until the day was far spent. It was four hours before sunset ere I could tear myself away from the Plain of Sheykh Mahmud. The endless string of camels and of pilgrim wayfarers was an unforgettable sight, and on my return to my host's house I met crowds of Syrian and Egyptian stragglers, mounted and on foot, proceeding up the Moalla

to rejoin the immense caravan which was already threading its way to the mountains.

Seyyid 'Alí gave me a hearty welcome when I entered the house. He had scoured the city, he said, in search of me, and had given me up for dead. I found everything in readiness for our journey, and when we had smoked a kalyán or two and quenched our thirst we got astride our ambling mules and made for the Hill of Arafat.

Now, when my friends and I left Mecca for the Hill of Arafat it was about four o'clock in the afternoon of Youm-ul-Tarvih. Late as it was, the streets were still packed with men and beasts. In the indescribable confusion steady progress was impossible, and to the universal disorder was added the danger of a general stampede on the part of our mules. The uncertain tempers of those animals of ours taxed our patience to the utmost. We had hired them in the belief that they were tractable creatures trained to amble. We rode them in terror of our lives, conscious of our impotence to control their paces. Now they would charge through a crowd in a panic blind and headlong, and next they would stand stock-still in a sweat of suspicion at the mere sight of a straw or a splash of water on the road. Our *moghavem*, having a lively inkling of our rising indignation, assured us with haughty unconcern that we had been wiser to have followed his advice and ridden camels. With one thing and another it took us quite an hour to reach the outskirts of the city. All the people we had met wore íhram except the drivers and the servants, who were in their ordinary clothes.

Outside Mecca the road widens, taking an abrupt turn from a northerly to a north-easterly direction. We passed innumerable huts and Bedouin tents, we skirted the Jebelé-Nur or Mountain of Light on our left, and then, swerving back to the north, we kept a sharp look-out for the pitfalls

AN EGYPTIAN DONKEY AND ITS DRIVER.

which beset our every step. In no case were the mountains many miles away. The colour of them changed gradually from a gloomy drab to a deep brown. Many camels had knocked up and lay festering in the sun. Along the route dead pilgrims had been buried so close to the surface that the odour of putrefaction polluted the air. The stench of decaying flesh was positively sickening. Again and again I had to hold my nose and cry aloud, "Astaghferallah Men-ash-Shaitan: I seek shelter in God from Satan." This phrase was used more often than any other, and in varying moods and with many meanings. Every time an animal fell down its driver would mutter the expression. If the animal remained obstinate, refusing to rise, the driver would rub his hands and repeat the words. An Arab Sheykh who rode behind me took refuge in God against the devil whenever he failed in his attempt to get past me. This was merely a sign of impatience. Had he given vent to his feelings by saying the formula sixty-nine times in quick succession I might possibly have made way for him for no other reason than because I should have expected him to strike a blow in defence of his claim to precede me. For the Prophet has said: "Utter not a word in wroth until you have repeated seventy Astaghferallahs." Believe me, it is a word to conjure with. As a mark of ironic negation it is more convincing than the strongest affirmative. In a rocky pass I asked Seyyid 'Alí, whose face had turned copper-red, and whose lips were scorched, if he was thirsty. "Astaghferallah, yá-Moulai!" he cried, smiling ironically. Later on, in the neck of the pass, where two men could not ride abreast, I had proof of the expression being used by way of a courteous refusal. Riding far ahead of us two mullás in íhram, with shaven heads and unkempt beards, drew rein simultaneously, each requesting the other to pass on. This exchange of punctilio was most

unseasonable. So long did the two priests bandy courtesy, crying "Astaghferallah" one after the other, that the word was soon used in a contrary sense by the pilgrims in the rear.

We waited about five minutes for the intervening pilgrims to ride on in single file, and when we reached the spot it was to find that the road lay between two rocks some four feet apart. One of my friends, quoting a well-worn proverb, bent towards me and remarked: "Why do they not remove those stones out of the path of the Faithful?" Seyyid 'Alí observed a priest in front of him, and replied significantly, "I behold a bigger stone in my path!" The priest, who was reading the Kurán atop of his camel, overheard the words, and tugged his camel round that he might face the sceptical rascal. The camel made a vicious snap at Seyyid 'Alí's mule. The mule, finding itself between two fires—the rock on the one side and the camel on the other—sat down on its haunches; and my guide, crying out the word, "Astaghferallah," came a cropper, striking his head against a stone. The upper portion of his íhram fell off. "Was it you, Seyyid 'Alí who fell?" cried Sheykh Eissa. Seyyid 'Alí, all bruised and bleeding, crept from under the mule's legs, and picked up his sacred habit. "Astaghferallah!" he replied; "it was not I who fell. It was my íhram. Unfortunately I happened to be in it." A burst of laughter followed and then a shrill scream. "I verily believe," said Sheykh Eissa, addressing me, "that your guide would make a kitten 'eat a dozen sticks' if it mispronounced the Arabic letter 'ain' in the feline word 'maou! maou!'"

But I had turned whence the scream had come and made him no reply. My guide's mishap, as I saw on looking ahead, had excited the compassion of a lady in a palanquin. She was a Meccan. No sooner did she see

the blood than she uttered a shriek of deepest commiseration. Then she recovered herself, and cooed out a couple of orders. Her warmth of heart was now as evident as had been her emotional susceptibility. In one breath she summoned her husband and sent him to Seyyid 'Alí with an offer of a certain famous prescription for wounds and bruises. In the next she implored her *moghavem* to ransack on one of the camels a chest that contained, among other things, a small bottle of scorpion oil. It was the remedy in question. This is the way it is prepared: the stings having been extracted, a couple of black scorpions are dried in the sun, are then put in a bottle holding about half a pint of castor-oil, and in this they are kept corked up for the space of a year. The unwilling Arab made demur, pleading that the delay would inconvenience the pilgrims behind her own caravan; but she reduced him to obedience with a look. "Be sharp!" she crooned, as he swung reluctantly on his heel; so sweet was her voice that without another sign of hesitation he leaped forward to carry out her wishes. The camel was made to kneel down by the wayside; then the chest was overhauled. By the time her husband had returned the precious oil was found and given to him. "Take it," she said, still gazing in 'Alí's countenance over her husband's shoulder, "and tell him to use it unsparingly lest the beauty of his face should be ruined." Meccan gentlewomen allow themselves a certain freedom of speech and action, otherwise a less presentable man than this woman's husband might have been jealous enough to resent the frank admiration in her voice. Seyyid 'Alí, having laid on the oil by means of a wooden bodkin used for the purpose, handed the bottle back to the husband, who pressed him to accept the rest of its contents, which would be useful, he said, in case of further accident.

My guide, however, refused with many thanks, saying that he could not find it in his heart to deprive the giver of the possibility of exercising her compassion on the next unfortunate she might chance to meet. And with this our respective caravans moved on.

Before reaching the Valley of Mina a serious accident happened, this time to a Malay pilgrim—an accident that proved fatal to him, for he was crushed to death in a stampede of mules. I am happy to say that our own caravan was not concerned in the disaster. Two women swooned at the sight, and all the other women round about raised their voices in bitterest lamentation, as though they had lost a near relative. A quarter of an hour after, when the unfortunate man had been laid to rest in his shallow grave, the two women who had fainted fell to prattling merrily as if nothing untoward had occurred. In fact, the chief characteristics of the Oriental woman are her absolute helplessness outside the restricted limits of her special sphere of influence, and the swiftness with which she passes from one emotion to another. There is no transition in her moods. She passes from the tearful or the terrible to the mirthful or the ridiculous at a single bound of her mercurial temperament. She is at once more womanish and more womanly than her European sisters. Not less marked, on this journey of ours to the holiest mountain of Islám, were the vanity of the wealthier classes as it preened itself among the men, and the unfailing good humour of the mob. A Persian nobleman, to whom my host had attached himself, had a special chamberlain whose sole duty it was to hand his lord and master a cigarette whenever he felt disposed to smoke. Another grandee of the same nationality, if he had occasion to drop his reins in order to adjust his beard, would cry out at the top of his voice to his *moghavem*, saying: "Boy, come here! Hand

me the reins!" preserving the while an expression of sphinx-like aloofness from all human kind.

As for the good temper of the crowd, it was due, I avow, to the soberness of each and every individual in it. Of drunkenness there was nothing on the road so far as my experience went, though I am constrained to admit that a good many pilgrims of my acquaintance had smuggled along with them a bottle or two of brandy apiece which, as a safeguard against prying eyes, had been labelled "cholera mixture." When I say the mob was sober I only mean that it was not drunk. Its humour, of course, was individualised. It varied with the character of the unit. Some of the pilgrims were lively, frivolous, even rowdy in a playful sort of way, meaning no mischief. These chatted and chaffed and flirted, killing monotony in many a breach of etiquette. They being theoretically resigned to the will of Allah, were resolved in practice to reflect Omnipotence in a merry mood. Others, rapt and devotional, intoned the holy and instructive Kurán, as they sat on their camels or limped barefooted over the stony ground. Prayers were muttered, religious hymns were sung, tears were shed, tales were told, amid the deafening shouts of the drivers and the lofty orders of the *moghavems*. Conspicuous in their pastime on the road were the Bedouins. Either they beguiled the tedium of the march by singing love-songs that acted like magic on the listeners, or else they showed that their weariness under restraint was invincible by frequent salivation. For yawning is almost exclusively a European habit. Oriental folk rarely yawn in public. If they are bored they give odd little sham coughs instead, while the Bedouins get rid of their moral phlegm or call attention to its existence by expectorating. Nor is the habit regarded even by the most courteous among them as offensive: it is hallowed by custom. The virtue of polite-

ness is relative. In Great Britain, for example, the very sound of the word "belch" could only be described as unspeakable; whereas the act itself in many Eastern countries breathes grace and gratitude after meat on the part of the guests. The more often it is repeated by them the better pleased is their host. Thus it is not in a carping frame of mind that I have written down whatever in the manners of my co-religionists excited my quasi-European squeamishness.

Now, the road, before entering the narrow Wadi of Mina, in which a village stands, narrows into a gap and climbs a flight of stone steps. There the pilgrims thought it necessary, as, indeed, I suppose it was, to call a halt, while they performed a two-prostration prayer, and in the chaos of confusion which arose I was separated from my companions, or shoved forward by the pressure of the crowd behind me. I was about to force my way back to them when I caught sight of a young Syrian girl sitting astride an ass. In the excitement of the moment she had forgotten to cover her face, and our eyes met. On the instant all thought of returning left me, for the girl was good to behold. The caravan she was with numbered about fifty people, and with it I rode along through the village into the dreary gully beyond. Every now and then we would glance at each other, the maiden and I. She was shy, and I was anything but bold, breathing, in her neighbourhood, a spell so pure. So on we journeyed, side by side, I covertly watching her every movement, and she playing hide-and-seek with my eyes, until at last I summoned the courage to smile on her. By chance, or I know not by what blessing, the smile was returned, and so heartening was its effect on me that my whole being seemed to throb, "not from one heart, but from a hundred!" Never was I so near to a complete surrender

to love at first sight. In the meantime the sun was going down behind the mountains in the west; shopkeepers were busy erecting their booths in readiness for the return of the Hájj on the Day of Sacrifice; torches were lighted, casting a lurid glare around; cannons were fired and rockets flung aloft to announce to the weary pilgrims the hour of evening prayer. There, in the ruddy light about us and the gathering darkness beyond, my maiden and I knelt down, obeying the call of the faith, within arm's reach of each other. In my heart of hearts I prayed that God would give me one day a helpmate as sweet as my companion.

Not a word had passed between us, nor did we exchange more than a glance, when the caravan got under way again. To my dismay there came along, with furtive tread, an ugly-looking Syrian, barefoot and old, and entered into conversation with me, placing himself, with an air of suspicion that nettled, and a look of proprietorship that alarmed me, between the maiden and myself. I thought that he might be her father, but he said he was her husband. Instinctively I drew rein, and soon she was lost to me in the blackness of the night. Caravan after caravan went by, but there I remained, meditating first on the ways of the veil-worn sex, and then on my hapless lot, cut off as I was from my companions, with only a few mejidis in silver in a small bag round my neck. By and by the moon rose, and I pulled myself together. In truth, the pangs of a healthy appetite began to clamour for satisfaction, and so I pressed forward until I reached the top of the valley, which was simply blocked with pilgrims, all hurrying as fast as they could go to the Mosque of Khaif. There I alighted, and, leading my mule by the bridle, made to cross the open space in front, where several coffee booths offered refreshment; but my obstinate beast would not budge, pull as I might. Not for nothing do the

Easterns call them "the children of donkeys." They are certainly more stubborn and more uncertain than their mothers. Many paupers were hanging about, and any one of them would have been only too glad to take the mule in tow, but the danger was that he would run away with it—such cases of theft are of frequent occurrence on the pilgrimage—and therefore I called to a booth-keeper asking him to send out his man to take charge of the beast that I might go and quench my thirst and smoke a pipe at his stall. Once rid of my stupid burden, I pushed my way into the booth which was crowded with pilgrims of the poorer classes. My sudden appearance among them raised not a little astonishment. I fraternised at once with a needy Bedouin, and together we smoked a pipe of peace. Suddenly a gun went off outside the booth, the report echoing and re-echoing among the mountains. "A blood-feud!" cried my companion, leaping to his feet, then ran out of doors.

CHAPTER VIII

ON THE ROAD TO ARAFAT
(Concluded)

MORE shots followed in quick succession: everybody in the booth made a rush for the door, except the booth-keeper and myself: and we stood staring at each other for some moments without uttering a single word. But my companion did not long remain silent under the questioning look I turned upon him. "The sons of dogs!" he cried: "they have not paid me!" and, before I could even smile at the humour of the situation, he was gone.

Accordingly, I made haste to overtake him, laughing quietly to myself as I observed, on reaching the open air, that the artful rogues had made good their escape under cover of the general panic, thus gaining for themselves, in the estimation of their indignant dupe, a reputation of cunning aforethought, which nothing I could say succeeded in shaking. When I assured him that they had merely turned the blood-feud to their own advantage, seizing the occasion as a source of profit to themselves, he informed me that there are a thousand and one ways of levying *bakhshísh* by night, every one of which is practised during the Hájj season, by the freebooters of Hejaz. "By Allah!" he cried, "I say, the shots were fired by the Bedouins as a signal to those customers of mine. They are in league with one another, and the money that should be in my

possession will soon be divided among those lawless tribesmen."

Whilst I was arguing with him, however, about fifty clansmen rode swiftly by on dromedaries, and disappeared in the direction of Arafat. Hardly had they passed out of sight than we heard the reports of their rifles, and after a little while the more distant battle-cries of their opponents. "You only heard the pursued," said I, "but the pursuers you have seen. You would not believe your ears; do you believe your eyes?"

"Perhaps you are right," he admitted, with surly reluctance. "But is my loss any the less? Take care lest you yourself become the argument of your present attitude towards me in my trouble. Those men belonged to the tribe of Hozail, and they are famous marksmen. To travel alone to-night might mean death. The wisest thing that you could do, therefore, would be to await the arrival of the next caravan.—Tell me, are you rich?"

I untied the little bag I wore around my neck (the sacred habit having no pockets), and emptied its contents into the palm of my hand. "That is all the money I have about me," I replied; "but my present poverty should be my best protector on the road."

"No, no!" he cried: "the people believe you to be rich, and therein lies the danger of your riding by yourself . . . Ah, here comes a band of pilgrims; thank God," he added, as he pocketed the *bakhshish* I gave him: "Allah be with you!"

The caravan to which I now attached myself was composed of eighteen lean camels laden with the effects of some eighty Malay wayfarers, and of three half-starved asses belonging to the *moghavem*, on one of which was strapped the corpse of an old man. A torch-bearer lead the way on foot. He was a man with such an infamous past

that even his fellow-pilgrims, disreputable as they appeared, held aloof from him, in terror of their lives. Still, when I came to scrutinise his appearance at close quarters, I could not find it in my heart to withhold the compassion that his feeble condition aroused in me. As his weakness grew more evident at every step, so the strength of will, which alone kept him from sinking, seemed to point to some concentrated purpose that he was determined to accomplish. Whilst I was wondering what this fixed idea of his might be, his companions whispered among themselves, and then came to me and said that he had run amuck in Penang, doing to death his wife and family; and they entreated me earnestly not to enter into conversation with him, lest he should be seized with another fit of homicidal madness and do me some serious hurt. But this story, terrible as it was, merely increased the interest I took in the man. I pitied him the more, because, whatever insane impulses might have ruled his past life, there could be no doubt of his being now possessed with a passion to reach the goal that should redeem him from the consequences of his misdeeds. That goal was the Mountain of Mercy, as the Muslims love to call the Hill of Arafat, and thus the pilgrimage was to him an act of penance, a penitential journey: every breath he drew was a token of his remorse and his every step, a proof of his yearning to gain salvation. The Malays, if I may judge from my observations of these specimens of the race, are lacking in the gift of self-restraint on the spur of their emotions. They never attempt to assume the virtues which they do not possess. If they are afraid, they lay bare their souls, and are not ashamed of their cowardice. Their natures are in keeping with the jungles of their native country—crude, chaotic, rank as the undergrowth, and as responsive to their tameless instincts as are the tiger, the bison, and the crocodile. The more

closely I studied the torch-bearer's demeanour, the more convinced I became of its sincerity. He bore his sufferings with a stoical endurance, to which his companions were blind, or at least indifferent, leaving him to gather what encouragement he might from a word of sympathy that I gave him. Raising his cadaverous eyes to mine, he thanked me with a smile more eloquent than words, more moving than tears. It seemed to say: "Brother, thy loving-kindness has revealed me to myself, and, behold, I am afraid." A lump rose in my throat so that I could scarcely speak. "Be of good courage," I whispered: "take refuge in God from thyself, and all will be forgiven thee." The words renewed his purpose, and, knitting his brow in a frown of lithe resolution, he staggered on over the rugged pathway.

The road, winding through several declivities of the valley, dips at length into the basin-plain of the surrounding mountains. There it takes a sharp turn to the east, which direction it keeps until on the limits of Arafat a place called Alemeyn is reached. When we were mid-way between the mosque of Khaif and the Hill of Arafat four of the camels died from exhaustion, and the loads they bore had to be divided among the freshest of the animals that were left. Whilst this was being done by the *moghavem*, our torch-bearer, in a state of wild excitement at the interruption, flung down the guiding light, and then fell to pacing restlessly to and fro, reeling in his gait like a drunken man, and muttering incoherently to himself; nor would he consent to pick up the torch, despite the *moghavem's* repeated orders, until the caravan resumed its march.

Shortly after, another delay was occasioned by the death of a pilgrim who had walked all the way from Mecca supported on his brother's arm. The *moghavem* refused to set the corpse on one of his asses (that it might be buried,

as the brother wished, on the holier ground of Arafat), declaring that an additional burden would break the back of his stoutest donkey. On this the brother burst into a storm of grief, and my heart so ached for him in his disappointment that I volunteered to bear the body beside me on my mule. A straggler, overhearing this offer, cried out in broken Arabic: "If you do not lend me your assistance, I too shall assuredly fall down and die." Seeing that the poor wretch was indeed worn out with sickness and fatigue, I made a virtue of necessity and dismounted, telling him that the price of his taking my place was that he should take care of the corpse. His readiness to comply with this condition, which would carry with it the necessity of religious purification, proved him to be no malingerer, and a second glance at him was enough to assure me that he had not many more hours to live.

All being ready, I laid hold of the mule by the bridle, and led the dying and the dead to the front of the caravan. To my surprise, I saw that the torch-bearer, in his anxiety to make the best use of his remaining strength, was some distance away, and so determined was I to keep in touch with him, and, if necessary, force him to accept my help, that I broke into a run, as fast as I could lay my tender bare feet to the ground. When I came up to him it was to hear a volley of musketry which seemed to proceed from a distance of not more than two hundred yards ahead of us; and, not long after, there came, from the rear, the ever-nearing tramp of a troop of horsemen riding at full speed.

The terror of the Malays, wholly undisguised, drove them into one another's arms. Not knowing which way to turn, they all huddled together like a flock of sheep, while the torch-bearer, whose one idea was proof against any danger that might beset him, broke silence for the first time, and derided them unmercifully because of their cowardice.

Then out stepped the Arab *moghavem*, as shepherd of the cowering rabble, and cried: "Be not afraid, but keep close to me!" And on this, he rushed quickly to the fore, shouting out at the top of his voice, in the Bedouin dialect of Hejaz: "Yá-Aghadin-ul-ghoum-Nahn-Meskinna-al-Zowarin!"

This sentence, "O tribal chieftains, we are only the poor of the pilgrims," he kept on repeating as he strode boldly forward: every now and then he turned round in order to hearten the cowering wretches that came trembling after him; but, before he had advanced a hundred paces, the galloping in the rear grew so loud that he ordered the caravan to halt and take whatever cover it could devise.

With a swiftness of decision, born of a common fear that the horsemen were Bedouins on the warpath, the terrified pilgrims made the camels kneel down at the sides of the road, and entrenched themselves behind them, scarcely daring to breathe, lest their whereabouts should be revealed. And no sooner had they flung themselves on the ground than the troop came rushing past, proving itself to be a squadron of Sherífian cavalry in pursuit of the freebooters. Much to the joy of the pilgrims, the firing ceased almost immediately after, and the skirmishers in front of us were heard to beat a rapid retreat on Arafat.

On the silence that ensued, came the tinkle of an approaching caravan, to which, on the principle that there is safety in numbers, we resolved to attach ourselves. The new-comers, forty in number, were Indian settlers of Mecca, passive-eyed and wheedling of tongue, and with us they were only too willing to make common cause, bearing themselves towards us with that spirit of brotherhood which is perhaps the most humanising characteristic of the Islamic faith. Within half an hour's march of Alemeyn, our united party was overtaken by a band of professional men

and women—musicians, singers, and dancers—who, mounted on gaily-caparisoned camels, presented a vivid contrast to our poverty-stricken pilgrims on foot. As each one went by, he or she was greeted by our greybeards with loud derisive cries of "Astaghferallah! Astaghferallah!" This demonstration on the part of our old men was meant to imply that theirs was the garb of virtue, however naked might be their wretchedness. In the same belief, I utter seventy *Astaghferallahs* before I venture to describe this entertaining company.

Altogether they numbered thirteen persons, the musicians being men, and the singers and dancers being the Flowers of Delight of Mecca. First came a drummer, beating intermittently, but at regular intervals, on a curiously shaped double drum, not unlike a huge orange cut in two, and so joined that each part came under each hand. It is called *naggharеh* by the Persians, and gave forth a shrill, discordant noise, that not even the big egg-shaped drum (Tabbál), which was beaten energetically with two long drum-sticks by the man that followed, could drown or materially modify. Behind these drummers rode two women singers, whose voices were as the tinkling of the heavy bangles with which their arms and ankles were laden. Next in the line of march was a young man with a withered face, blowing incessantly on an instrument called *surná*, that bears a resemblance, in form and also in tone, to a Scotch bagpipe. After him, a couple of dancing girls, with streaming ringlets, and clad in silk dresses of many colours, burst into rippling laughter at every second, partly because it was their business to be merry-hearted, and partly because they found food for mirth in the members of our caravan. But when they saw the number of our dead —and our Indian contingent had added not less than seven to our funeral train—their lively amusement was stilled, and

one of them said to me, on passing by: "Were I in your place, O Haji, I should bury the corpse, and offer the seat it occupies to yonder torch-bearer, who seems to stand in sore need of succour." "The wishes of the dead must be respected, O Compassionate Heart," I replied; "and as for the torch-bearer, nothing would persuade him to renounce his task of self-sacrifice. He has taken a vow to perform the pilgrimage on foot, and he comes from a far distant country." The answer she returned was lost in the ear-piercing squeak of a *kerná*—a woeful wind instrument at least four feet in length—and in the scarcely less strident din of a third tom-tom. The rear was brought up by two men—the one thumbed a stringed *rubáb*, a Bedouin instrument admirably adapted to the music of the wastes; while the other, the jester of the band, had powdered his face with barley flour, and wore a tall head-gear of white lambskin, and a long cloak of vari-coloured silk. Casting a quizzical eye on our effects, and one look in particular on my mule with its dual burden of the dead and the dying, he remarked, in an audible tone, imitating the Indian accent: "*Wah, wah, wah! Ahlul-Jehannum!* Bah, what a hell party!"—an expression that, in face of the open self-sufficiency of the majority among us, made me roar with laughter. My companions, refraining from retaliation in kind, contented themselves with repeating the word *Astaghferallah* until their tormentor had passed out of hearing.

The reader will understand that these musicians and dancers were not proceeding to Arafat that they might be present at the forthcoming sermon on the mount. Their aim was to collect as much money as they could wring from the pilgrims, and then be the first to lead the procession back to Mina. For there, after the Lenten hardships of the Hájj are ended, several days are spent in holding revels and in merry-making.

THE MUSICIAN CAMEL CAVALCADE.

An uninterrupted march of half-an-hour, under a stormy sky, brought us to where two walls define the boundary of Arafat. There the *moghavem* halted, and cried out, in a joyful voice, "O blessed pilgrims, here we are on the exalted soil of Alemeyn! May peace be with Muhammad and with his family!"

Forthwith there arose on all sides such an outburst of religious enthusiasm as I had not witnessed even in the Harem of the Ka'bah. Cries of "Labbaik allahhomá labbaik!" passed from lip to lip. The torch-bearer fell on his face to the earth, and shed tears of delirious joy. The dying man on my mule sank to the ground, dragging the corpse with him, and sang praises to Allah with his last breath. A native dervish, beside himself with hashshish-bibbing, danced furiously round and round, beating on his bare breast, and tearing his unkempt locks, and shrieking excitedly, "Yá-Hú! Hú-yá!" Then, with one accord, we all prostrated ourselves five times in prayer, rending the air with a chorus of "Here I am, O Allah, here am I!"

After the excitement had subsided, the *Sahebin-ul-Maiet*, or owners of the dead, met in conference together, and decided that it would be best to bury the corpses of their friends before we entered the encampment on the plain of Arafat. To that end the help of the Bedouin drivers was solicited. A grave was dug, measuring about ten feet by twelve, and having a depth of some two-and-a-half feet and into this the bodies were lowered and placed side by side, some wrapt in their white *kefans*, and the rest wearing the habits they died in. The pit was then filled up, and large stones were piled a-top, serving the double purpose of preventing the corpses from being snatched by beasts of prey, and of marking the place where they lay buried. This done, an Indian *mullá*, putting his thumbs behind the lobes of his ears, the fingers extended, exclaimed

with indescribable fervour, "One only is great—one Allah!" while the pilgrims, taking their stand behind him, bowed themselves to the ground in prayer.

The funeral rites over, the *mullá* declared the dead to be "martyrs in the Faith," on which the *moghavems* of our respective caravans, having made all necessary preparations, ordered us to press forward in the direction of the city of tents.

I looked round in search of the torch-bearer, but he was nowhere to be seen, nor could anyone whom I questioned tell me what was become of him. I never saw him again.

On resuming our journey, the threatening storm-clouds overhead dissolved in a shower of rain which drenched us to the skin. More impatient than ever to find Seyyid 'Alí and my Persian friends, I bade the Malay and Indian wayfarers a hasty farewell, then, urging my mule into a quick ambling pace, was soon far in advance of their caravan.

The road is very narrow at Alemeyn, but it widens considerably, as, taking a sudden bend from the east to the north-north-east, it approaches the central broadway of the encampment. This thoroughfare was turned into a bustling open-air bazaar. Coffee-booths were erected at intervals of every twenty or thirty yards, and at these places the crowd was thickest, and blazing torches impregnated the air with smoke and the stench of noisome oil. It is customary to keep awake throughout the hours of this night, praying and reading the Kurán; and maybe the practice was honoured in the observance by many a pious pilgrim within the seclusion of his tent; but, in this gadabout centre of uproar and confusion, the vigil was passed in no such devotional mood. Eating and drinking took the place of religious exercises. Stories were told to the bubbling of the water-pipe; love songs were intoned under the journey-

ing moon; and pilgrims, whose minds were sharpened with long brooding over metaphysical conundrums, could yet find the keenest zest in bartering noisily over the purchase of a melon.

It passed through my mind that here, if anywhere, I should be likely to happen upon Seyyid 'Alí, for his pleasure-loving disposition, as I shrewdly guessed, would be irresistibly attracted to where it could be best satisfied and displayed. And in this expectation I gave my mule in charge of a beggar, and, having ordered a cup of coffee at a refreshment stall, sat down on a stool to keep watch.

I had not been waiting more than a quarter of an hour when I saw Sheykh Eissa come riding towards me. The "rose of my heart bloomed," and I leaped to my feet with joy, calling him by his name. At last his eyes met mine, and in another moment he was at my side.

"Sir," he said, with a deep salaam; "Seyyid 'Alí is looking for you *dar-beh-dar*—from door to door. He has just gone down the road with our *moghavem*, and one of our servants, and a Bedouin driver, to see if he can find you. If you had bought one of my talismans, you would not have lost yourself in the crowd."

"My friend," I replied, "you will remember the story of the Slave in Sa'adi's book of the *Rose Garden*. When he was on board ship he cried night and day from fear of the sea. Then Fate threw him overboard that he might appreciate the safety of the ship, and be thankful to be rescued and set on board again. I have learned the same lesson on the journey from Mina to Arafat. There is no condition in life so miserable but it may be rendered almost pleasant, in retrospect, by a more wretched one still."

Meanwhile, Seyyid 'Alí, hastening up with his companions, had overheard my remarks, and now interrupted me, saying with some heat: "Yá-Moulai, I am grateful

for this—that the company of vagabonds should have had the effect of making my society less tedious to you now than it was before you deprived me of the brightness of your presence! Verily, I have good reason to rejoice that you fell among thieves and rogues!"

"You misinterpret his Excellency's words," cried Sheykh Eissa. "Your vanity lies so close to the skin that——"

"Why should you make it bleed, then?" I broke in. "A truce to your quarrelling. Show me the way to our camp. My eyes are heavy with sleep. It is as much as I can do to keep them open. Come, Seyyid 'Alí, unknit your sullen brow. I have missed you grievously. Let that assurance suffice to heal your wounds."

As I spoke a bugle sounded the hour of midnight. Seyyid 'Alí, still somewhat glum, started off at once, carrying a thick Bedouin club. After him came the servant, bearing a lighted *fánús* in his hand, while Sheykh Eissa and myself followed close at his heels, leaving the *moghavem* in the rear to look after our mules.

Our way lay to the east of the central broadway. Before entering our own quarters, in the north-eastern corner of the plain, where all the dignitaries of the Hájj had pitched their tents, the Sheykh pointed out to me the high-pinnacled pavilions of the Sheríf of Mecca, of the Amin-us-Surreh, of the Pashavat of Turkey, of the Persian Consul-General, of the High Priest of Teheran, of the military commanders of Hejaz, and of the Amir-ul-Hájj-ul-Shami and the Amir-ul-Hájj-ul-Mesri.

"His Holiness the Sheríf," said he, "has more tents than one could count at one's ease. Do you see that high pavilion where the green flag is flying? That is the audience-chamber of his Holiness. Some of the tents serve as dining-rooms, some as withdrawing-rooms, some

WATER-CARRIERS OF MECCA.

THE PASHA OF HEJAZ AND THE AMINUS-SURREH.

as bath-rooms. Others, again, as sentinel houses, as stables, as cooking-houses, as servants' apartments, and so forth."

Well, the tents of all the grandees, including those of my Persian hosts, were surrounded by *tejirs* or canvas walls measuring about seven feet in height. The extent of the confined space varied of course with the number of one's retinue; our enclosure being comparatively small covered a stretch of ground about fifty paces square. A sentinel was on guard at the entrance, above which hung a Persian lantern, and directly in front of us as we passed through was a semi-circular partition of canvas which concealed from sight the series of tents beyond.

These tents of ours, five in number, must not be confounded with the ones we had used at Mecca. They belonged to a Persian *moghavem* attached to the Syrian caravan, and were made of white canvas lined on the inside with a particular kind of red cloth that goes by the name of *shelleh*. Supported on nine poles covered with the same material, they were so constructed that any one of the sides could be converted at will into the front entrance, and that doors could be opened wherever and whenever needed. By this means it was possible to keep the interior relatively cool.

The floor of our withdrawing-tent was spread with Persian rugs, and at the further end facing the doorway was a downy *mokhata* or pillow divan. To this snug abode I returned, after I had washed my hands and feet in a tent close by, to find that the servants, following the hospitable custom of the Bedouins, had already laid the cloth for supper. My hosts were not present; having dined, they were fast asleep in their own tents.

It is not considered seemly in the East for inferiors to sit down in the presence of their superiors, nor do the latter ever so far forget their superiority as to stand up in welcoming a guest of lower rank. The act of rising is a

recognition of equality, and not a mere greeting. Thus, when "I fell down to supper" (as the late Shah was fond of saying in the diary of his European tour) I was in etiquette bound to accept the homage of Sheykh Eissa and Seyyid 'Alí, who were standing up. But their attitude of docile humility so tickled my sense of the ridiculous that I raised my head after a few minutes, and said: "Ah, are you there? *Bismillah*, sit down . . . *Yá-Allah!*"

The invitation was certainly a breach of social custom on my part, inasmuch as I was the master—a breach, however, for which the exclamation of *yá-Allah*, which is an acknowledged substitute for rising, made ample amends in my humble opinion. With an equal contempt for formality, or finding the silence oppressive beyond endurance, I then gave them permission to talk. If I refrained from inviting them to partake of the savoury dishes of camel's flesh prepared for me, it was simply because I knew that they had already broken their fast.

The conversation fell on the subject of the Bedouins. The Sheykh, having told me a story of a blood-feud between two clans, untied a little parcel which he was in the habit of carrying about with him, and took out three steel dice loosely threaded on wire and inscribed with talismanic characters, together with a brass disk divided into squares and covered all over with hieroglyphics. "By means of these two things," said he (while Seyyid 'Alí tipped me a wink of incredulity), "I can foretell the future."

With those words, he shook the dice in both his hands, and threw them on the magic disk, and then, after making pretence to read the signs on the face of the dice, as well as those within the squares they occupied, he sat meditating for several minutes in gloomy silence. "Blood," he muttered at length, biting the thumb of his right hand, "blood, I say, will be shed on this plain before the rising

of the sun. A peaceful caravan will be annihilated by a warrior band. Terrible! I see some pilgrims: they belong to my native land; I hear them crying for mercy: but the clansmen—ah, what is this I read?—yes, the clansmen of Hozail, having plundered them, refuse to give quarter. Surely this is a warning to me to keep a sharp look-out that I may use my influence should woe betide my fellow-countrymen! May God protect them through my timely aid!"

By this time I had finished my meal, and, having drunk a cup of coffee and smoked a kalyán, I dismissed the fortune-telling Sheykh, who promised, before he went away, to return at daybreak and accompany me to a sort of gymkhana, where the Bedouins were to show their skill in horsemanship. And then, being dead tired, I said good-night to Seyyid 'Alí and flung myself down to rest. Seyyid 'Alí, on leaving the room, sang a Persian lullaby softly to himself. It ran something like this:—

Hence, begone, thou desert ogre,
Sleep would fain my baby lull:
Baby, hush, thine eyes are drowsy,
And the night is growing dull.
Hush, the night is full of shadows,
Full of phantoms dark and dread;
Soundly sleep, my precious baby,
Morning comes with joyous tread.
Hushaby, Beloved of Allah,
Sleep, and thou shalt go to school,
Pen in hand, shalt learn thy lessons,
Sagely con each word and rule.
Thou shalt read the wondrous sayings,
That in holy Koran stand;
Famous shalt thou be, my baby,
Wealthy, mighty, handsome, grand.
Hushaby, thou breathest smoothly,
And thine eyes like daisies close;
Sleep hath caught thee to her bosom
Rest, my baby, sweet repose.

CHAPTER IX

ARAFAT DAY: NIGHT *

IT has always been difficult, if not impossible, to satisfy the cravings of an inquisitive nature; and when Seyyid 'Alí left the tent, singing the Persian lullaby, my curiosity was not long in overcoming my desire to sleep. It was not the prayerful hum of the canvas city that kept me awake; it was the undevotional uproar, with the appeal it made to my love of adventure. I lay there for some time thinking, as men active and alert in body and mind will, of the chances I might miss of witnessing some deed of heroism or of violence, were I to allow myself to count the possible cost of the risk, rather than the certain opportunities of distinction which its dangers would present to a man of an enterprising spirit.

With these thoughts in my mind, I leaped to my feet and at once wandered out in the camp. To me it seemed one vast place of sepulture; for, go where I might, there I happened upon the victims of the cholera fiend or its terrible ally, fear. I saw them writhing on the ground, with limbs hideously contorted and faces blackened like charcoal; I heard the sick groaning from within the tents as I hurried by to the more convivial surroundings of the market-place; and I stumbled over the graves in which the dead

* In the East the night precedes the day, thus our Sunday night is their Monday night.

had been shovelled with unseemly haste by their terror-stricken friends. The custom was to bury the dead outside their tents (or wherever they might happen to fall, if away from the camp), but to this custom the neighbours sometimes objected in a craven regard for their own safety; for my part, the longing to recreate my mind amid more companionable scenes, caused me to run all the way to the meidán. And there, carousing with the ragtag and bobtail of the loiterers and stragglers of the encampment, I counted private soldiers, our guardians of the peace, by the score. They filled the front benches of almost every coffee-booth, making the night merry with their hearty laughter, while their companions, not behindhand in conviviality, burst out singing love-songs to the accompaniment of the clapping of hands.

The Bedouin Sheykhs, virile, dignified, and exclusive, did not deign to take part in these revels, but spent the vigil of the night on the Mountain of Mercy or in the cafés that they kept for their private use. They were not dressed in the pilgrim's garb; they were arrayed in all the warlike trappings of their tribal splendour; and being impressed by this silent declaration of their independence, I came at length to the conclusion that they, regarding themselves as the chosen people of the Faith and the holy places as their inheritance, deemed it right that the winding-sheet of humility should be worn not by themselves, but by those who visited the Holy Land of Islám from beyond the seas. Another characteristic of theirs, a characteristic that runs on parallel lines with the first, is the attitude of the Sheykhs to their clansmen, and *vice versâ*, as it reveals itself in the expression of their faces. As every one knows who has studied the laws of this free and irresistible people, despotism, as it exists in the Muhammadan monarchies, is a thing impossible amongst them; and the

consciousness of this inalienable grace, why, upon my word, their faces positively shone with it! Every Sheykh's face is as free as is that of his clansman from that meek and submissive servility which is the mark of the Persian or (in a less degree) the Turkish dependent in the company of his master. A Sheykh, on the other hand, being first amongst equals, bears himself towards his followers with a dignity and charm commingled out of paternal pride and childlike modesty, nor does such an one consider his position to be threatened because his tribesmen never cringe. They, too, are freeborn men and carry their heads high even in the presence of the Sherîf of Mecca, who holds his race too dear to exact an obsequious homage. Indeed, his face never wears a frown; his voice is never raised in anger; and yet for all who come near him the consciousness of his power lies not in themselves, but in the man himself: in a word, it lies in his complete self-forgetfulness and his freedom from all arrogance and pretence.

Well, as I walked along in the direction of the Holy Mountain, I found a great many pilgrims engaged in calling out the names of such of their absent friends as had begged to be remembered on the night of Arafat. The Prophet recommended his followers to perform this act of remembrance, and said that whosoever among them should thus create seventy pilgrims by proxy would be rewarded with seventy palaces in the world to come and the praises of seventy thousand angels. Imagine, then, with what zeal and devotion my fellow-pilgrims lifted up their voices! After each name, loud cries of "Here I am, O Allah! here am I!" were raised by one and all, the Maghrebis singling themselves out, to my amusement, by the number of women's names that came tripping off their tongues; it seemed for all the world as though

THE SHERÍF OF MECCA IN HIS UNIFORM.

they were resolved to win the praise of none save female angels!

Tickled not a little by this delicious trait of character, I wandered on, falling the while into a vein of pleasant memories on the friends I had left behind me, until I was suddenly recalled to myself by a mighty hue and cry. And this is what had happened. A Bedouin thief, breaking through the tent of a pilgrim whom he knew to be engaged in calling out names on the plain, saw in a corner a round bundle in a white cloth. With greedy hands he made to possess himself of its contents when, to his intense amazement, a woman burst from its folds, shrieking! She had wrapped herself up in the cloth ere she went to sleep, as the custom is among Orientals of the lower class, so that not even her head was visible to the nefarious Bedouin, who, on now perceiving his mistake, threw himself on the floor, with the intention of slipping headforemost under the tent. He had certainly got away at once, had not the husband returned, and, in the belief that the thief had it in the mind to take advantage of his dearest treasure, laid hold of the intruder by the leg, giving the alarm that had startled me from my day-dream. The woman swooned away, while the Bedouin tugged himself free and made good his escape. A few minutes later, a sergeant and his men shouldered their way through the crowd that had collected round the entrance—too late for once.

I hesitated a moment before I ventured to put my fate to the test of further experience. I knew well that I risked robbery, if not death, in continuing my ramble; for, as I had noticed from the moment of my setting out, the camp was haunted by paupers with the most evil and desperate faces I ever beheld. They lay in wait for the unwary pilgrim wherever the gloom was densest, and at best the lanterns and torches about each tent shed but a dismal

glimmer on its purlieus; but the desire to scale the Hill of Arafat and to say my prayers on its summit, at last overcame the whispers of alarm. My only weapon was a stout cudgel, which I had picked up as a protection against the pariah dogs that barked at every passer-by; however, as only a couple of dollars were left in the little bag round my neck, I felt that I could plod along in the teeth of danger with no load of uneasy wealth on my mind. And so, with a fresh glow of courage, I sallied forth.

It was by this time about half-past three in the morning, and a lull seemed to fall on the camp, or perhaps this was merely a fancy of mine, a testimony to my jangled nerves. Be this as it may, I had not taken a hundred paces before I had the evidence of my senses to testify to the fact that my recent misgivings had been something more than the suggestions of timidity or nervousness. For, on reaching a secluded and storm-rent tent, I was suddenly surrounded by a gang of paupers, who sprang out upon me, clamouring for alms in a tone so threatening, that my pride rebelled and would not allow me to purchase my safety at its expense. Enough, I thought, if I seek refuge in yonder tent. A hail of stones about my head increased my determination to gain the place of shelter, about fifty yards away, and thither I cudgelled me a path with a desperate expenditure of strength. The surly rascals trod close upon my heels, stoning "the devil of a Jew" with surly illwill; but inside the tent they dared not follow me. For all that, if they had committed the blunder of counting the booty before the battle was won, I had soon the discomfiture to discover that innocence in distress may be less fortunate in its destiny than villainy in disguise. To the injuries I had received at the hands of the robbers were now added the insults of the inmates of the tent. They stood on the defensive, taking me to be a thief; I called heaven to

witness that I had come near to being his victim; whereupon they assumed the offensive, and, catching me by the nape of the neck, dragged me outside and gave me in charge of a sentinel who, as ill-luck would have it, happened to be on his beat. Without saying a word, I disbursed myself of half the money I had about me, which was a proof of the innocence of my intentions so convincing to the sentinel, that he let me loose and fell to upbraiding my unwilling hosts for their unjustifiable suspicions. His eloquence took the sting out of the reception they had given me, and I went on my way blithely enough.

When I at last reached the Hill of Arafat, it was to find that the Bedouins and the Sheykhs of the tribe of Kuraish had already taken possession of the best places around the enclosure whence the sermon would be preached on the following afternoon; for it was there, about half-way up the Hill, that Muhammud was wont to address his followers, sitting on a dromedary. This place, as well as the summit beyond, is reached by means of a broad flight of steps, which, winding up the southern slope of the Mount, gets gradually more precipitate and narrow. No attempt to keep order was made by anybody in authority, with the result that the pilgrims going up would meet the pilgrims coming down, and be locked tight in one another's arms, each party fighting its hardest to force a passage through. On the crest the pressure of the crowd was even greater: I mean more especially in the neighbourhood of the Makam, or prayer-niche of Adam, with its white-washed platform and central obelisk, where pious wayfarers from every quarter of Islám were pouring out their thanks to God from the innermost tabernacle of the heart.

Having said a two-prostration prayer—a duty that I had not neglected on passing the sermon enclosure below—I turned to the north where, in the valley separating the

Hill from the surrounding mountains, a band of Bedouin shepherds had lighted huge roaring bonfires, by the light of which I could see their flocks (so soon to be slaughtered as a sacrifice to the Omnipotent) peacefully nibbling the sparse green herbage of the lowlands.

From the north I went to the south, and gazed down on the plain below, to where, under the ruddy glare of the torches and the yellow light of the lanterns, the tents of the faithful stood out against the darkness beyond. The only regularly pitched camps were those of the soldiery, the Sherîf, and the other dignitaries of the Hájj; all of these occupied the space on the left-hand side of the observer; while in the fore-ground, to the right, as well as to the left, the tents of the Syrian and the Egyptian caravans were conspicuous: and most of these were either circular or elliptical in shape and of considerable size, sometimes as many as twenty pilgrims, and never less than ten, sleeping in a single tent. For the arrangement between a Syrian pilgrim and his *moghavem* is this: The pilgrim pays the *moghavem* a certain sum of money in return for which the latter guarantees (1) to find him a seat in a *kejaveh* when the caravan is on the move, (2) to give him the use of a camel on which to set his provisions and belongings, and (3) to reserve for him a sleeping-compartment within one of the tents that are thus turned into portable caravanserais.

Now, the Syrian caravan, whose commander considers himself the chief of all the foreign pilgrims and brings with him a strong detachment of cavalry, claims superiority over that of Egypt; but both caravans glory in the possession of a Mahmil or Holy Carpet, a treasure, by the bye, that is not a carpet at all, but a square wooden frame with a top in the shape of a pyramid. A becrescented ball of gilt silver is set on the four corners of the square and

on the crest of the pyramid, and the little shrine is covered all over with rich brocade embroidered in gold and edged with silk tassels. This covering varies in colour and in material, but, generally speaking, the Syrian Mahmil is draped with green velvet and the Egyptian with red. The origin of the Mahmil is said by some to date back to the year 645 of the Hegira, when a Queen of Egypt, called the Tree of Pearls, made use of a similar kind of thing as a litter, on the occasion of her pilgrimage to Mecca; and the tradition goes that she borrowed the design from the chest in which Muhammad stored the wares that he took with him on his journey from Medina to Syria, a journey made before he had revealed to the Arabians his new doctrine. Nowadays the Mahmil is empty. But a copy of the Kurán is fastened outside below the topmost crescent. In the course of time the Egyptian Mahmil came to be known by the name of Aishah, the Prophet's second wife, who one day questioned him, saying: "Now am I not better than Kadijah? She was a widow, old, and had lost her looks; you love me better than you did her?" And Muhammad answered: "No, by Allah! She believed in me when none else would believe. In the whole world I had but one friend, and she was that." And it is after this peerless woman Kadijah that the Syrians have called their Mahmil. Along with that of Egypt goes what is called the Kesveh, which consists of eight pieces of black silk and a green curtain. The first is used for covering the walls of the Ka'bah, and the second for veiling the tomb of Abraham. This ceremony, which takes place during the pilgrimage, was first instituted by Kurb, King of Yemen, and in the year of the Hegira 750, a man named Suleyman bought seven villages in Egypt, the produce of which has since gone to defray the yearly expenses of the Kesveh. These villages now yield an income of about £7,000 sterling,

and all this money is spent in purchasing the Kesveh and in despatching it with great pomp to Mecca.

After meditating for about half an hour on the inexhaustible subject of my sins, I forced my way through the press to the foot of the Hill, and after several adventures in a place called the "Kitchen of Adam" (where the Indian and Meccan pilgrims of the poorest classes pitched their tents and where even the dervishes and beggars had found a shelter)—adventures too trivial to be related here, I returned at last to my own pavilion, and "laid me down with a will" to sleep. The whole encampment was now wrapped in a solemn hush.

CHAPTER X

ARAFAT DAY: DAYBREAK

POP, pop, pop! I lay between sleeping and waking, and wondered what the noise could be. Bang, bang, bang! And again, bang, bang! I awoke with a start—surprised to find myself wide awake; but an hour's sleep is not long enough to stupify a man. The reports grew louder, and the dogs began to bark from every corner of the encampment.

"Come hither to prayers," sang out the muezzins; "devotion is better than sleep." By that time every pilgrim was up and stirring. Wheuf! the air of the false dawn, how chill it was! I summoned a servant, telling him to light a fire outside the tent; other pilgrims followed my example; and soon the hissing samovar gave promise of a cup of tea.

The eastern horizon, in the meantime, was growing redder and still more red; and the pilgrims, having performed their ablutions and said their prayers, began to intone the Talbiyah and the Tahlil, pouring out their supplications to God and their belief in His unity, in a wailing lilt of entreaty and contrition. Others stood in circles, beating their breasts and singing the Labbaik. It was a scene of enthusiasm impossible to describe.

Rap-tap-tap, tap-rap-rap, floated on the air: it was the sentinels beating their drums to salute the break of day.

Guns fired incessantly on the hills and in the valley and on the plain. And now the hawkers and the worshippers, the water-carriers and the paupers, the hungry and the ascetic, all began to shout together. "Sweet water refreshes the soul," cried the water-carriers; "drink of the sacred water of Ainé-Zobeideh." "Give in the name of Allah," whined the beggars; "my living is in the gift of Allah. Are ye not the creatures of Allah? Yá-Allah, yá-Allah!" "Light the fire and fill the cup," said a Persian officer, in his eagerness to break his fast. "And don't forget to 'fatten' the water-pipe," added his companion. "And you shall 'dig up its grandfather' [that is, be the last to smoke it as it passes from mouth to mouth], my friend," said the officer, smiling.

When the sun came up on us, I saw Sheykh Eissa for the first time that morning; he was standing at a distance of some yards, talking to Seyyid 'Alí, whose handsome face shone with its usual expression of light-hearted amusement. The two men bowed to me reverentially, their hands folded on their breasts.

"Look, yá-Moulai," said Seyyid 'Alí, "the top of the Mountain of Mercy is so full of tents and animals and men, that the poor jinns, to say nothing of the angels,——"

"Now, don't talk blasphemy, my friend," interrupted a priest called Mullá Ahmad. "Do you think there is no room left for the angels?"

"God forbid!" cried Seyyid 'Alí, raising his eyes aloft. "They can perch on the tent-poles, or on the camel-saddles."

"Kofre-negueíd (don't blaspheme)!" yelled the Mullá. "Don't you know that the angels are transparent? But for that the sun would be eclipsed, so dense is the choir of angels in the circumambient air."

"Is that so?" replied Seyyid 'Alí, with a smile that incensed his questioner beyond all measure. "Does not the Holy Tradition say that there must be six hundred thousand souls on this Blessed Plain, and that the deficiency, if any, will be made up with the necessary number of heavenly choristers? I had not thought that the deficiency was so great as to cause so vast a reinvasion of light from above."

"The Tradition," shouted the Mullá, "says that there must be *fully* six hundred thousand souls: there may be more, but there cannot be less——"

"How many pilgrims are there, do you think?" I asked, interrupting the Mullá.

"It is human to err," he replied, sententiously; "but, however many there may be, and I believe there are 600,000 and more, Allah may increase them. And as for the angels, Seyyid 'Alí, they will confine themselves to the regions of the air, immediately above us, and will say 'Amen' to our prayers and supplications."

"Multiply your estimate by 3 and divide it by 6, and you will not be so far out of your reckoning, I think," and so saying, I appealed to Sheykh Eissa for his opinion.

The Sheykh scanned the encampment with critical eyes. "Let us say," he murmured at last, "that this city of tents on the plain and the hills contains innumerable souls and moving beasts. Am I not right, Mullá Ahmad?"

"Well said, my friend!" cried the Mullá. "Nobody save Allah—may I be His sacrifice!—could count the number one by one. And who are we that we should set a limit to God's omnipotence and clemency?"

The Turkish authorities were almost as ignorant in the matter as the rest of the pilgrims. Some of the former said 280,000, others 380,000; a more daring calculation was

twice the first number (560,000); and the most timid of all was that of a Turkish official of my acquaintance, who estimated the concourse of pilgrims at 250,000. Now, in 1807, there were 83,000 pilgrims in Mecca, according to Ali Bey; in 1814, Burkhardt, the Swiss traveller, who visited the Holy City in disguise, under the name of Sheykh Ibrahim, calculated that there were 70,000 pilgrims; while Richard Burton (Sheykh Abdullah), in 1850, found the number reduced to 50,000;—a number which, in 1902, was increased fivefold, in my humble opinion; indeed, I maintain with the utmost confidence that this calculation of mine, if somewhat too high, cannot possibly be reduced below 220,000; for the opinion among the Meccans was unanimous that the Bedouin and foreign elements, on the occasion of my pilgrimage, were more than four times as numerous than they had been within the memory of the oldest inhabitants.

Now, as regards the plan of the encampment, it has always been the endeavour of the well-to-do to keep as close to the Mountain of Mercy (the Hill of Arafat) as possible, and the consequence of this is that the whole expanse of the northern face of the plain is more or less aristocratic, with an effort to regularity in the arrangement of the tents, the most distinguished camping-places being in the north-eastern angle, where the Sherif's pavilions are pitched, and all along the north and north-western ridges, where the tents of the Turkish soldiery and the foreign grandees spread themselves in unbroken lines to the point of attraction in the north-east. For to sun themselves in the light of the Sherif's beneficent eye, is the ambition of all pilgrims who have any claim to regard themselves as gentlefolk. The more the plain slopes to the south, the more it is covered with the tents of the vulgar and with the pilgrims that have no tents at all; while midway between the two extremes are the booths and stalls of the open-air

bazaars: these are also scattered here and there in every encampment. The Syrian and the Egyptian caravans, with their respective Mahmils, take up their appointed places, nowadays, without any serious dispute arising between them; but in olden times the rivalry was so keen and so bitter, that blood was often shed. The Meccan religious officials, the Turkish civil and military authorities, and the privileged grandees of all nations, including, of course, the Persian Consul-General, follow the precedent of immemorial custom; but for the rest the rule of "first come, first served" holds good in every quarter of the plain, I mean within the limits of the broadly defined distinctions of class which make it expedient, if not compulsory, for the paupers and less reputable pilgrims to keep to the south, leaving the northern regions to their brethren of higher castes. In theory, the Mussulmans are all equal, each to each; but, socially, they are at least as exclusive as the Christians, and infinitely more exacting where etiquette and ceremony are concerned; while at Mecca, the Kiblah of the Faith, there is, with the yearly influx of pilgrims of heterogeneous races, a growing tendency to assimilate the two most striking effects of western centralisation as seen in the capitals of Europe—namely, an inclination to become more and more tolerant in matters of religion, and a determination to regard wealth as the determinative factor in separating class from class. To every student of Islám the first of these is of tremendous importance. He must bear constantly in mind that the embroilments between the seventy-two sects, so far from being irreconcilable, show a steady inclination to become less marked in the holy city of Mecca at the present day, notwithstanding the hostility of the priests towards a complete reunion. Time was when the Shiahs, to which sect the Persians and the Nakhowalis of Medina belong, were precluded from exercising their

religious rites in their own way, and when they were even shut out from the regular encampment on the plain of Arafat. But to-day they are not only allowed to gain salvation as the spirit moves them through the performance of their special ceremonies; they are also accorded the privilege of following the time laid down in their own almanacks for the due solemnisation of their sacred rites, and that altogether apart from the Orthodox sects who follow invariably the instructions of the Kazi of Mecca.

This is an immense gain; let us consider what it means: Does it not mean that the Prophet's aim in making Pilgrimage an inseparable part of the Faith, is getting, year by year, a step nearer to completion? And if so, can the enthusiast's belief in the possibility of an united Islám—an Islám rooted in "one life, one law, one element, the one far-off divine event," be dismissed as a dream too spiritual to be substantiated? I say no; for a dream that is already a spiritual truth, as it most certainly is among the enlightened at the present time, may one day become a political fact in the eyes of the whole world. However, come with me to to the Persian encampment, and I will tell you on the way something more about the city of tents, as well as something more of the Mussulmans of the Shiah persuasion.

The first thing that struck me, by the light of day, was the contrast presented by the personal cleanliness of such of the pilgrims as had performed their ablutions, and the inconceivable filthiness of the surroundings in which they lived. To attempt to describe the causes that resulted in this insanitary condition of the encampment (a condition that, in the absence of any medical help worth mentioning, added considerably to the violence of the cholera and the number of its victims) would be to enumerate the disgusting habits of every individual camp-follower in the train of the grandees, not to allude to those of the poor and destitute,

A LEARNED MUSSULMAN OF INDIA.

who either lived under tattered rags over rude crossbars, like the dervishes, or slept with the vermin on the naked ground. The scene was pleasing to the eye, no doubt; but the contagion spread by its most picturesque features was none the less overpowering to the nose. At a distance it was artistic: a glimpse of gipsy life twinkling with colour; walk into it, and it was only fetid stench and festering pollution. The tents of the less poverty-stricken caravans were pitched in rings called *dowars*; the beasts of burden being hobbled in the centre, or tethered to the tent-pegs outside; and the shape and colour of the tents, if less various than the facial types of those who dwelt in them, were sufficiently diversified, in certain quarters, to relieve the monotony of the general picture. Red within and white without, the tents of the middle classes were dome-shaped, while those of the privileged dignitaries were as sumptuous and varied in colour and form as those of the poorest classes were ingenious in contrivance. The Sherífian colours were green and gold and red, and the most beautiful pavilions of all were certainly his. After these, perhaps, came those belonging to the Persian Consul-General, who made a not unsuccessful attempt to compete with the highest in the splendour and completeness of his camp equipment. Moreover, the thoroughfares of the select corner of the plain were, upon the whole, well-ordered and creditably policed, more especially was this the case with those in closest proximity to the Turkish authorities.

And now with these preliminary remarks on the appearance of the city of tents by day, I will ask the readers to follow me into the Persian encampment situated midway between the Syrian and Egyptian caravans; for it is my present wish to be the means of introducing him to that interesting Shiah sect that

flourishes in the neighbourhood of Medina and is known by the name of Nakhowalis. I had a long talk with about a dozen of these men (they had accompanied the Persian pilgrims from Medina to Mecca as guides) and it is on the information that I gleaned from them that this short paragraph is based.

Well, when the Prophet fled from Mecca, with a few devoted followers, he was received by a great number of the people of Medina with every mark of confidence. Those who fled with him were afterwards called Mohajer or Immigrants, while those who went out to help him from the city of refuge came to be known by the name of Anssar or Auxiliaries. It is from the latter party that the Nakhowalis claim descent. They now number about two thousand families, and live, in open feud with the Orthodox inhabitants, outside the city gates. They have their own mosques and cemetery, as they are not allowed to worship within the Harem of the Prophet's Tomb, nor were they permitted, until quite recently, to cross its threshold. The cause of all their disabilities, however, is of a political rather than religious nature; for all of them hold the first two Caliphs in execration, the greater number forswearing allegiance to Othman as well. The bond of sympathy between the two groups thus formed is the veneration and love they bear Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law, 'Alí, whom they believe to have been the lawful successor of the Prophet. However much or little they may differ in doctrine from the Shiahs of Persia, they are acknowledged by the latter as belonging to the same communion; indeed, the Persians contribute, year by year, considerable sums of money to the support of these distant co-religionists of theirs—sums which are handed over to them by one of the Persian pilgrims. Moreover, a Nakhowali, if he chance to visit the country of the Lion and the Sun, will be sure to

return with bags full of money; nor is this charity of a sort that loses both itself and friend, the recipient being quick in responding to every act of friendship, as many a Persian pilgrim had good reason to remember if, as it usually happened, he took up his abode at the friendly hearth of a Nakhowali. Hospitable and chivalrous, the Nakhowalis adhere strictly to this unwritten law of the desert-born, that a guest must be protected even if he be an infidel; none the less they count both Jew and Christian as unclean, being as scrupulous in this particular as the Persians, whose rules they follow in the discharge of their religious purifications.

My informants, who were armed to the teeth, were handsome, swarthy, and fearless-looking. They bitterly resented the fact that, on certain points of religious observance, they were constrained to obey the instructions of the Kazi of Medina, rather than those of their own clergy. They declared that this obedience had been wrung from them as a condition of their freedom to have priests of their own; but since I had not an opportunity of going to Medina to see for myself, it would be unwise to give further publicity to reports which reached me either through the Orthodox Madani, who were naturally antagonistic, or through the Shiah Nakhowalis, who were not less certainly biassed in their own favour. Their womenfolk (to make an end of this short discourse) are reputed to be the most beautiful of all at Medina; they were so closely veiled, however, that they might just as well have been the ugliest—none save their husbands could tell.

The scene now changes.

CHAPTER XI

ARAFAT DAY: FORENOON AND AFTERNOON

EARLY in the morning, shortly after my visit to the Persian encampment, the Turkish cavalry paraded and manœuvred. The troops were composed of Turks, Kurds, Arabs, and Albanians. To see these men in the pride of a soldier's bearing, you must watch them as they rush into life and motion; for with their ragged uniforms and unlikely-looking mounts, they are at a disadvantage when standing at attention. But once let them get in full swing, and they soon prove that they are trained for use and not for show. To me this sudden change from unsoldierly slovenliness to skill and daring activity, was a revelation. And the horses—lean Arabs from Southern Arabia or wiry nags from Egypt—responded spiritedly to every twist and turn of the bridle wrist: they too were transformed. The feats of horsemanship performed by the Albanians were the wonder and delight of every pilgrim. These manœuvres of theirs, so different from those of European cavalry, are doubtless aboriginal. They leave their cantonment in fighting array, riding to the tattoo of a small kettle-drum called *nakus*. On a sudden, at a beat of the drum, the regiment opens out, scattering in all directions: each man pricks it in pursuit of the enemy, firing incessantly into the air. The sound of the drum now changes, and the men come galloping back, meeting in a dense column: then all

is ordered confusion and breathless expectation. The signal is given, and then with impetuous fury the whole squadron hurls itself on the spot chosen to represent the enemy's position. The men, alternately dispersing and reforming, advancing and retreating, obey every beat of the drum, their horses being as intelligently alert as well-trained polo ponies. So reckless were the Albanians on this occasion, that it was a miracle that only a rider here and there came to grief. And all the time this sham fight was raging, horsemen from every corner of chivalrous Arabia galloped aimlessly about the encampment, waving their tufted spears. In the hearts of the pilgrim bands watching their every movement they struck an awe not unmixed with terror: for, as Seyyid 'Alí put it, the horses seemed shod with lightning as they flashed to and fro; and lightning, may it not spare the guilty and strike the righteous? . . .

You must not think that the pilgrims were idle all this while—not even Seyyid 'Alí and myself. A party of us met about nine o'clock to visit the holy places on the plain, Seyyid 'Alí acting as guide. My companions were Sheykh Eissa, Mullá Ahmad, Mirza Yusúf, and Seyyid Muhsin. The demeanour of these men is worth describing as a touch of character. The tour being a religious duty, their mien was designed to give expression to the earnestness of their devotion. The talkative charm-monger, Sheykh Eissa, strode forward as in a trance; though he rarely said a word, his lips moved constantly, as if he were whispering in the ear of a jinn: he was spellbound. His companion, Mullá Ahmad, looking neither to the right nor the left, tripped along with mincing steps, reciting prayer after prayer in Arabic (classical style). The man who walked at my side was Mirza Yusúf, than whom a deaf-mute of ordinary intelligence had made himself better understood; for the Mirza, having taken a vow to remain

silent till he had repeated the Verse of the Throne seven thousand times, replied to all my questions by signs and nods and awkward contortions of the body. As for the two Seyyids—Muhsin, a friend of mine from Central Persia, and 'Alí, a man you already know—even they, though drawn together by the law of affinity, yet felt constrained to conceal their innate lightheartedness from each other, wearing in its place an expression of sanctimoniousness more comical than insincere.

Well, the usual course is to proceed at once to a place called Jammé-Sakhra, where the Prophet used to stand and say his Talbiyah; but my friends, allowing themselves to be persuaded by me, had set out instead in the direction of the Mountain of Mercy. There, with even greater difficulty than on the previous night, I shoved my way up the first flight of steps, using Seyyid 'Alí sometimes as a buffer and sometimes as a wedge. The others had remained below, being afraid to risk the dangers of the ascent; for even on the lowest skirts of the Mountain the swarms of pilgrims were subjected to pretty rough handling; while on a somewhat higher ridge the Wahhabis of Nijd were quarrelling with the Bedouins of Al-Hejaz as to who should have the best places for listening to the Kazi's eloquence in the afternoon. We had skirted the angry disputants and reached the steps not much the worse for wear; but despite all our efforts we found it quite impossible to mount higher than the first enclosure whence the sermon is preached. There we might have stayed till sunset, a prey to the rapacity of paupers, had not the pilgrims on the plain learned wisdom from our plight, and stayed where they were. This lessened the pressure round the platform: and the number of pilgrims coming up being now less than the number going down, we took advantage of this opportunity without a moment's hesitation, and

allowed ourselves to be carried away by the downgoing stream to the foot of the Hill.

On reaching the bottom, we turned to the right and made for the Ainé-Zobeideh—Zobeideh, wife of Caliph Harun-ur-Rashid. To this spring has been given the power of working miracles: merely dip a black cloth in it, and it will be washed as white as milk. No dye can resist its cleansing property, no stone withstand its charm. I might believe this or not as I liked, said Seyyid 'Alí; for his part, he would demand no greater wonder than that it should quench his thirst—a thirst that was insatiable, he begged Zobeideh Kharnum (Mrs. Zobeideh) to believe. Throwing himself on his stomach, he wriggled through the crowd to the water's brink; I did likewise; and then, having washed our hands and feet and quenched our thirst, we crawled back and said a two-prostration prayer out of the gratitude of our hearts.

"God bless Zobeideh! May her fountain never run dry!" cried Seyyid 'Alí; then off we went at last to where the Prophet used to recite his Supplication before preaching his sermon on the Mount. This place, as already mentioned, is called Jammé Sakhra: it is a small enclosure standing within whitewashed walls, and is divided into two compartments—one for men and one for women—both of which contain prayer-niches. Here our friends were awaiting our arrival, having said their prayers—a duty which they discharged a second time (God will increase His kindness!) by way of returning thanks for our safety.

By this time the sun shone in the zenith, and the whole plain was covered with worshippers, saying their mid-day prayers: the angels, as they believed most fervently, lending ear to their entreaties and responding to such as were sincere with an approving Amen.

Now, a Mussulman believes in earnest; watch him as he bows himself in praise or supplication, and you will not doubt his sincerity. His faith is unquestioning, for is it not to him as an elemental force, as necessary as the air he breathes? Why, it warms him like fire, this faith of his, and refreshes him like water, nor is the earth than it more solid and indestructible. The East has many things still to learn from the West, but faith is not one of them. Surrounded by the dying and the dead, these terror-struck pilgrims, at the first cry of the muezzin, regained their presence of mind. They had been stricken with fear as with an ague, they had fled from death as from a scourge, but at the first sound of that devotional summons, they stood at attention before their Creator, like soldiers awaiting the word of command. And then, as though God had spoken, they bowed their bare heads—then they sank on their bare knees—and then they prostrated themselves on the ground. Do you doubt their sincerity still? And if their faith is unimpeachable, can you deny that the Prophet was less magnificently sincere?

With these thoughts in my mind, I hurried to our tents to read a few chapters of the Kurán and to say the prescribed prayers, before setting out again to witness the Sherif's procession and attend the Kazi's sermon. This day, the 9th of the moon, was a day of fasting; but a good many pilgrims found pretexts for breaking their fasts, and I, being worn out after the long journey of the preceding day and the exciting vigil of the night, was among the number. Having eaten my fill, I dropped fast asleep, to be awakened about three o'clock by the firing of guns. Our party at once left the tents, giving full instructions to the servants to have everything in readiness for the rush from Arafat at sundown.

Then out once more into the plain, weltering in the

PERSIAN PILGRIMS FROM TABRIZ, HAVING TEA ON BOARD THE STEAMER.

sunshine, to stand, bare-headed and with naked feet, until the sun should sink behind the horizon. . . .

The Egyptian Mahmil had already passed on to its appointed place on the mountainside; but, fortunately, we were not too late to see the passing of its Syrian rival which, draped in its covering of gold and green, now threaded its way across the plain. The Mahmil headed by a dozen led horses of the purest Arabian strain, all richly caparisoned with embroidered cashmere shawls, was surrounded by a squadron of horsemen and camel-riders; while immediately in front of the prancing Arabs, came heralds in white headgear and red coats, bearing silver batons in their hands. And thus the green badge of Syria moved on to its allotted place on the skirts of the Mountain of Mercy.

Hardly had it reached its destination, than the band of the Sherífian procession crashed out a march: and soon afterwards the cavalcade drew near. A score or two of men on foot cleared the course, making vigorous use of the long staves they carried in their hands. A number of mace-bearers, who came next, were followed in turn by a regiment of Sherífian cavalry, barbarously dressed and gallantly mounted, each man prepossessing the spectator in his favour. Even more popular was the appearance of the magnificent body of men which next excited our admiration. It was a staff of Arab chieftains, the pick of the country, riding on mettlesome thoroughbreds, and combining in their persons all the chivalry and the dash of their indomitable race. Then a blaze of crimson-red—the Sherífian state colour: this struck my eye on the flowing saddle-cloths of the led horses of His Holiness, the Sherif of Mecca, who, meekly riding on a white mule, quite alone in the line, was clad, like the poorest of the poor among the pilgrims, in Ihrám. Behind him walked his courtiers and

the members of his Household, while a crowd of Bedouin Sheykhs on horseback or on camels brought up the rear.

When the cavalcade was stationed near the Mahmils, guns were fired again and again to announce that the sermon was about to begin. Then, amid the sighs and sobs and tears of that vast congregation, the Kazi of Mecca, sitting on a dromedary, began to preach, or (perhaps more correctly) to pray. Speaking in Arabic verse, each line being repeated about a dozen times by the pilgrims, he intoned the rhythmic psalm in a deep but ringing voice. The opening passages ran as follows:—

Thou, O Lord, no mate possessest:
Thou, in truth, the King of kings!
I am here for Thee—for Thee:
I am here with praise for Thee.
Thou no compeer hast, O Allah!
Nights are darkened at Thy command:
Stars are shining in obedience:
Angels praise Thee round Thy Throne.
Prophets come at Thy beck and call:
The sun goes round to sing Thy praises:
Thou art holy and Thy name is holy:
Thou art merciful, magnanimous, and compassionate!

. . . . . .

May the end of our life come with heavenly blessing!
May the angels of punishment pass by from our doors!
We glorify and praise Thee, Lord!
May the angels of mercy show their grace to us!
May our humble supplications be acceptable to Thee!
We glorify and praise Thee, Lord!

At first the pilgrims held their breath, afraid of missing a word; but as the prayers and psalms and exhortations proceeded, their enthusiasm grew more and more unrestrained. No longer content with repeating the Kazi's words, line by line, they burst into tears, and from tears

into shrieks. They beat their breasts, sobbing from sheer excess of joy; they could be seen, on the plain, whirling round and round, as they sang the Labbaik. Some swooned, partly from delirium of religious emotion, and partly from the effect of the sun's excessive heat. One moment—and your blood seemed to boil and your brain to swim in liquid fire; then came relief: you were drenched in sweat, reduced to liquid that alternately evaporated and gushed out of every pore. I was wedged so tight in a compact mass of pilgrims, within a stone's throw of the preacher, that there was no chance of my reaching the haven of my one desire—the cooling spring where I had slaked my thirst at noonday. And so one hour wore on.

What had happened among the pilgrims out there in the dancing glare of the sunlit plain, I cannot say; but the least said about the reports of the behaviour of some of them, the better. No good purpose can be served by emphasising the exceptional and parading the obscene. Where I stood, longing for the sound of running water, there, at least, the solemnity and the fervour of the congregation were of a sort to take one's reason captive, overcoming, by sheer repetition of appeal, even the craving I had to swill my gullet with a draught of water.

Another hour went by: the sun was sinking in the west: the eastern horizon turned colour, passing from a purple shade to a tone of deepest crimson. The green flag on the mountain-top still floated high in air; still the preacher gave out his message, to the ever-increasing excitement of his people; and then at last, just as the sun dipped in a pool of red, the signal of Essraf was given. The sermon was over, and the night of another day begun. We were now entitled to call ourselves Hájís.

"*Aydákum Ghebúl* (May your festival be accepted),"

cried Seyyid 'Alí, kissing me three times on the cheeks, in accordance with the practice.

And I returned the kisses, saying—

"*Tebarik-Allah!* (May God be glorified)."

I now pass on to the Day of Sacrifice and the Days of Drying Flesh.

CHAPTER XII

THE DAY OF VICTIMS: FROM SUNDOWN TO SUNSET. THE DAYS OF DRYING FLESH.

LONG before the signal of Essraf was given, the canvas-city had been in a state of confusion: so that by the time the sermon was over most of the tents had been folded and stowed away. Thus everything was now ready for the impetuous rush from Arafat.

The pilgrims' jubilation was then at its height. The uproar was deafening: drums were beaten, bugles called us to make haste, and rocket after rocket exploded as it whirred through the air. . . . We waited half an hour or so, exchanging kisses and congratulations, and then a path was prepared for the cavalcades. The Egyptian Mahmil took the right-hand side of the road and the Syrian the left: after them charged the mounted pilgrims, followed by those on foot, all and each showing the same reckless determination to press forward over every obstacle, no matter how narrow the road might be.

This headlong stampede after the sermon on the Mount is historic. It never grows stale with the years. The havoc it wrought in 1320 of the Flight it would be quite impossible to exaggerate; for the confusion which has become traditional was increased fivefold by the number of pilgrims, a number that was vastly greater than any within the recollection of the authorities. Women and men

swooned in the crush and were trampled to death—litters were overthrown and smashed in pieces—camels were trodden under foot: but neither disaster nor death could, in the slightest degree, glut the wild desire by which the crowd was moved—the desire, namely, of being more completely possessed by the feeling of a religion-wrought delirium. It was not a triumphant procession of peaceful pilgrims, therefore, though that is undoubtedly what it should be; it was a charge of religious madmen running *amok*. How many were killed or maimed, I can hazard no guess; but of this I am quite certain,—the casualties had not been so terrible on any previous occasion within the memory of man.

Thus the dense mass moved on, and about the hour of midnight we reached Muzdalifah. There we halted for the night, the pious passing the time in praying and reading the Kurán. Very few pilgrims took the trouble to pitch tents here, the vast majority of them sleeping on the ground. Before lying down to rest, Seyyíd 'Alí and I collected forty-nine stones apiece for the Lapidation of the Devil in the valley of Mina.

Now, this ceremony takes place three times: first, between sunrise and sunset on the 10th of the moon when every pilgrim must fling seven stones at a buttress, situated at the Meccan entrance to the valley, and called the Great Devil. These seven stones must be gathered at Muzdalifah, and have to be washed seven times and each time in fresh water. On the following day, the 11th, twenty-one stones must be thrown: seven at the Great Devil as before, seven at the Wusta or Central Point in the middle of the valley, and, last of all, seven more at the Ula or First Place lying at that entrance to Mina which faces Arafat. All these twenty-one stones may be gathered either in the valley itself or at Muzdalifah on the return journey; but they, too,

must be washed seven times and each time in fresh water. The same rules apply to the third Lapidation, which is held on the 12th of Zú-'l-hijjáh: and the three ceremonies aforementioned are performed in commemoration of the tradition that Abraham was tempted three times of the Devil, at those very places in the valley, what time he was about to sacrifice his son Ishmael. Now the first day, which is the 10th of Zú-'l-hijjah, is called the Day of Victims, while the two following days are called the Days of Drying Flesh in the Sun.

Awaking early, my party set out, at peep of day, to the sacred monument hard by, where, amid scenes of indescribable solemnity, the Festival Prayers were celebrated by the Kazi of Mecca, who also preached a short sermon. Departing thence at sunrise, we arrived at Mina about nine o'clock, one of our servants dying of cholera on the road. We buried him where he fell, each one of us wondering if his own life would be the next to come to an end. What would happen after the slaying of the victims we dared not think. The prospect looked gloomy in the extreme.

Having eaten a good meal, we traversed the valley in the direction of Mecca, in order to be rid, as soon as possible, of the tiresome duty of stoning the Great Devil. When we reached the entrance to the valley, it was to find our access to his Satanic Majesty blocked by a vast concourse of excited pilgrims. The road, about thirteen yards wide, was packed with horsemen, camel-riders, litters, pilgrims on foot, and women in *kejavehs*, all struggling and fighting to get within stone's throw of the buttress which rests against a wall that is only a little higher than itself which is—say, three yards high by two yards broad. Of the Orthodox sects the Shafeis are the most privileged, for they are allowed to stand at a distance of five cubits from

the Devil, whereas the Hanefis are supposed to make their attack the more formidable by fighting at close quarters—within arm's reach of the Arch Foe.

And all the while the great mountains frowned down upon us; very awe-inspiring I found them: the seven stones I had brought along with me fell at my feet only to be picked up by Seyyid 'Alí.

"Come, yá-Moulai," said he: "the devil is not so big after all. See, I will fling your stones as well as my own at little devils like myself."

After this "ceremony" was over, we returned to our camp where a barber was waiting "to bring me out of Ihrám." When he had trimmed my hair, shaving it round the nape of the neck, and had cut my nails, I made to take off the pilgrim's garb, saying—"In the name of God the Merciful and Compassionate, I intend to doff my Ihrám of pilgrimage, according to the usage of it by the Prophet, on whom be blessings and glory! O Allah, reward me to the number of the hairs of my head with Light, Purity, and Grace. In the name of God—God is great!" Upon this the barber helped me to undress and (after I had had a bath) to put on my gala attire which was Egyptian in make and in material.

By this time the servants had purchased the victims, and they now came to tell me that all preparations had been made for the sacrifice. I deputed Seyyid 'Alí to slay my harmless sheep, from a sudden invasion of squeamishness. And before the day was over the valley of Desire was turned into a reeking slaughter-house, and, it may be added, into a cemetery for the dead pilgrims. These also were victims—the victims of the misdirected religious zeal which had prompted a slaughter that served no other purpose than to spread the epidemic. The less said of it here the better. I have no wish to make the reader

DISEMBARKING AT JIDDAH.

PILGRIMS AT JIDDAH.

sick. It will be enough to add, to what has been said in a previous chapter, that the camels were sacrificed by none but grandees, who dispatched their victims with the words: "In the Name of God the Merciful and Compassionate! God is great!" the same words being used by the other pilgrims in sacrificing the sheep!

All beasts of prey are believed by the superstitious to keep away from the valley during the Day of Sacrifice and the Days of Drying Flesh; for, had not the victims been brought down from heaven by angels, and driven by them under the guidance of Bedouin shepherds, to the place of slaughter? But the truth is that the Takruri negroes were more blood-thirsty than any of the carnivorous animals or birds of prey: they laid in wait until the sheep were killed, feasting their eyes on the creatures' dying agonies, and then pounced on the carcases like hungry vultures.

Now, a great many pilgrims, after casting off the Ihrám and putting on their festival attire, went at once to Mecca, visited the Ka'bah, repeating the ceremonies already described, and then returned to Mina to slay their victims. One of our party who had taken this course fell sick of the cholera on the road, and the news of his grave condition reached us at mid-day. We therefore determined to take up our quarters in Mecca, for our comrade's sake, and to return to Mina, day by day, in order to complete our stoning of the Devil. Sheykh Eissa, however, remained behind to take charge of our camp; and when we got back again next morning, it was to hear from him a flamboyant account of the fireworks and jollifications of the Great Festival that we had missed. We listened to his stories of the too-unfettered revelry by night with heavy hearts, for our friend was dead. Outside, the whole valley stank like a shambles, hundreds of pilgrims having succumbed overnight to the cholera epidemic; and so, when we had stoned the

Devil for the second time, we bent our steps again to the Holy City, taking care to remember our comrade in our prayers as we passed by the mosque of Khaif. There we saw some poor pilgrims drying the flesh of a dead sheep—a revolting spectacle. Next day, the 12th of Zú-'l-hijjah, we cast the remaining twenty-one stones at the three buttresses in the Valley of Desire, and were ready on the 13th to join the little pilgrimage to Al-Omreh—a mosque near the pillars of Alemeyn—having to that end performed ablutions with the water of Zem-Zem, and put on the ihrám once more, and made our declaration of intention opposite the Black Stone. It took us about three hours to reach the sacred spot where we said a two-prostration prayer after having subjected our heads and hands and feet to a second ablution. Then we rode back to Mecca and again went through all those ceremonies within the Harem and between Mount Safá and Mount Marveh which have been described in the earlier pages of this narrative. This brought the little pilgrimage of Omreh to an end, and the ihrám was finally removed. Thenceforward the streets of Mecca were crowded with pilgrims dressed in every costume of the East.

I remained a week in the Holy City after the Day of Victims—indeed, no pilgrim could bring himself to leave the Kiblah of the Faith before the 18th of Zú-'l-hijjah—and whiled away the time by frequent visits to the Harem and the bazaars. By these means I added considerably to my knowledge of the pilgrims and their ways. The result of my observations will be found overleaf.

On the 18th I attached myself to a strong caravan bound for Jiddah, and there I said good-bye to Seyyid 'Alí. The reader will meet him again, however, in the brief pages of Part III.

PART III

Part III

MECCAN SCENES AND SKETCHES

CHAPTER I

THE MECCAN BAZAARS

The European, who prides himself on his practicality, is inclined to look down on the merchant's calling, though it is surely one of the most practical of all. The Oriental, on the other hand, who is supposed to be the most romantic of mortals, generally holds it in high esteem. Therefore the Oriental, if he is less practical in that he is slow to adopt the time-saving methods of his Western brother, is far more logical in paying every respect to a calling which is one of the chief factors in the welfare of nations. Moreover, the Oriental's attitude towards travelling proves him to be far more practical than he is generally believed to be. As a general rule he takes to roving, either to lay up for himself treasures in heaven by visiting holy places, or to better his condition in life by trading in foreign parts. If he is a pilgrim he combines the spiritual and the wordly aims above-mentioned, strong in the Prophet's assurance that it shall be no crime in him if he seek an increase from

his Lord during his pilgrimage. The consequence is that Mecca is turned every year into a bustling fair, an exchange and mart where Eastern commodities of every description can be purchased in cash or in kind. This being understood, I will ask the reader to accompany my guide and myself on our shopping tour of the Meccan bazaars, for I must not forget, as a true pilgrim, to buy a soughát or present for each of the friends I left behind me.

"Yá-Moulai," said my guide, "let me advise you to grease your tongue with honey before we go, that the shopkeepers may respond to the compliments you must pay them by lowering their prices. I notice that you have a smile on your lips. Yá-Allah! do you wish to return with an empty purse? Press your lips together, affect a poverty-stricken demeanour, otherwise you will be fleeced not only by the traders, but also by every beggar in Mecca, more particularly by those who lie in wait for the generous-hearted round about the Harem. On entering each shop you must cough as hard as you can, though you tear your chest in pieces: then the shopkeeper will be compassionate in the matter of charges. Another counsel I would offer you is this. Let us suppose you want to buy a knife. The first thing you must do is to ask the cutler for a sword, then for a dagger, then for a pair of scissors, and, after refusing all of these things with a sneer, you must command him to show you a knife in a voice toned to insinuate that the purchasing of that article is an act of generosity on your part, a magnanimous recompense to him for his trouble. For our merchants, though they are often crafty and betray a suspicious conscience, are, if you treat them as they expect to be treated, of a childlike simplicity. So cast off your sandals that you may acquire the reputation of a saint and thus be treated fairly in the bazaars. Believe me, Yá-Moulai, if you follow these instructions, you will

drive a better bargain with the Meccan than you would by trusting to the honesty of a Firangi trader who is civilisation-proof against these simple wiles." And so chattering he led me through the crowded streets, and would have asked for alms, that I might pass as a beggar, had I not forbidden him sternly to practise in my service a piece of deceit as unworthy of himself as it would be humiliating to me; whereon he glanced at me furtively muttering in his beard: "He is as proud as a Shahzadeh."

The city of Mecca is divided into two parts. Of these the upper quarters are called Malá, as opposed to the lower ones, which are known by the name of Misfál. The shops are very similar to those at Jiddah; but in the street that bears the name of Mussah, which is the broadest and most picturesque thoroughfare, they occupy, I may say, the ground floor of the houses on both sides, presenting to the passers-by such a wealth of Oriental goods as I for one had not seen before. The familiar word "bazaar" is Persian, its Arabic equivalent being Súgh, and a whole quarter is sometimes called after its neighbouring market, as is the case, for instance, with the quarter called Súghé-Seghir. To the North of Mussah-street is situated the Soueygha Bazaar, where goods (especially the belongings of dead pilgrims) are sold by auction twice a day, in the morning and in the evening, and there also slaves are exhibited and knocked down to the highest bidder. The Syrian Bazaar, or Sughé-Shamí, is to be found to the east of this slave market; the armourers display their weapons in the Súghé-Geshatshi near the Platform of Purity, whence the Sughé-Lail, or Night bazaar, is within easy reach; while further to the east, below the skirts of Mount Abú Ghobais, in a market named Moamil, pottery of any description can be bought by the pilgrims as receptacles for the curative water of Zem-Zem. In a square to the east of this bazaar camels and sheep are

sold, and fruit stalls are kept by Bedouins: and from thence one passes to the blacksmiths' shops or Sughé-Haddadin.

The pilgrim who would purchase shoes or sandals must seek the upper quarters of the town, and there, in the north of Malá, he will find what he wants in abundance, as well as many provision stores which serve to replenish the supplies of the yearly caravans; for most of these dealers have agencies at Jiddah, Bombay, and Cairo. In the same quarter, still to the north, is the meat market, most of the butchers being Bedouin Arabs who keep special flocks of sheep and camels for slaughter and for sale. From this bazaar the way lies through some extremely narrow and dirty lanes to the Zokáké-Seni or Chinese Market, where gold and silver vessels and jewellery are sold by a few Muhammadans of the Celestial Empire. Thence to the north-east are situated the dyers' shops, which go by the name of Sughé-Sabbaghin. The manufacture of indigo dye, which is much used in Arabia, is very interesting. First the small leaves are dried in the sun, then they are powdered and put into earthenware jars filled with water, where they remain overnight. Next morning the leaves are stirred thoroughly until a dark blue froth is produced in the water, after which they are left to settle. When the indigo is taken from the bottom it is spread on cloths to drain, and is then mixed with dates and saltpetre. The method of calendering the garments dyed with indigo consists in beating them on stones with wooden hammers, which is generally done to the accompaniment of a song.

"Bismi'lláhi'r-Rahmáni'r-Rahim!" With those words on our lips we entered the bazaar to the north of the Harem. What first struck my attention was a man sitting on a rug with a small wooden frame in front of him, a round blue

tile by his side, a reed pen in his right hand, and a few sheets of paper in his left. He was an Arab scribe, and around him were gathered a crowd of illiterate pilgrims, all waiting for him to write their letters. The first to go forward was an Afghan pilgrim. He had muscular limbs and a fierce, scowling face. Said he: "Write me a letter to my brother: he is ill and lives at Sakhir." The scribe, who was sitting on his hips, cocked up his right leg ever so slightly so as to form a sort of table, and asked the Afghan what he was to say. "By God!" exclaimed the native of Sakhir, "I expect you to provide something more than the paper and the penmanship. You must supply the words as well. What! you know not what to write? Have I not said that my brother is sick and like to die? Tell him that I will bring him a bottle of Zem-Zem water —that will cure him, if it please Allah—and a winding-sheet that has been dipped therein, which will be useful if he die—God forbid!" Here my guide stepped to the front, saying, "From the Percussion of the Grave and from the Interrogation of the Grave may God the Merciful and Clement deliver him!" A bright smile flashed over the Afghan's face. "May your kindness increase!" said he. Meanwhile, the scribe dipped his pen in the silk threads on the blue tile which served the purpose of an inkstand. These threads were soaked in soot and water, and it took about three dips to write a single word. Every now and then he would raise the paper to the left side of his face and look at it slantingly out of the corner of his eye. If a word did not please him he would rub it out by moistening his forefinger and dabbing it half-a-dozen times on the word, for the ink left no permanent trace on the paper but came off in layers when rubbed with the wet finger. The lines of the letter were wide apart, and an ample margin was left on both sides. When the bottom of the page was

reached the scribe filled the margins lengthwise, and then fell to writing between the lines. I could not help thinking that the sick Sakhiri would find it easier to answer the interrogations of Nakír and Munkar, those dread Inquisitors of the Grave, than to read the letter from Mecca, which struck me as being almost as difficult to decipher as a Chinese poem. When the last word was written the Afghan took out his purse, to the strings of which was tied a round seal of brass whereon his name was engraved. Having unfastened the seal he handed it to the scribe. It amused me to see that the purse was withheld by the canny Afghan, who obviously had no intention of losing over the transaction more than he had bargained for.

All Orientals, particularly the Persians, lay great store by their seals. Those of the lower classes are generally round and made of brass, and are either fastened to their purse strings or left dangling by their waistbands. The mullás have a preference for square seals of cornelian set in base silver, as approved by the Prophet; while the high officials "gratify the pride of irresponsibility," or the instincts of taste in the matter, some choosing gold seals ornamented with diamonds, and others turquoise seals decorated with pearls or with rubies. Sometimes a line of poetry is engraved on the seal as well as the owner's name. I knew a pious Shi'ah whose seal bore this inscription: "The slave of the King of the country, Imám 'Alí," only the last word, of course, being his own name. Later, on our journey through the bazaars, we chanced to see a Persian hakkák, or seal-maker, at work. The cornelian he was carving was fixed in tar on the small board in front of him. The deft way in which he wielded his small hammer was the result of a steady hand and an unerring eye, gifts for which the Persians are justly famous. The motto was intended to commemorate his pilgrimage to the Mother of

Cities, and ran as follows: "Sadik, the least of Hájís and the slave of God, in the city of God!"

I entered into conversation with this man Sadik, and was lucky to find in him a very lantern of traditions. The works of Baidáwí, of Abú Sa'íd al-Khadrí, of al-Farrá of Bagh, of Nu'man Ibu Bashír, of Abú Hurairah, of 'Abd Allah Ibu Mas'ud, to say nothing of the Persian and Arabian poets, he seemed to know by heart. When I complimented him on his learning, he replied, saying: "If I am blessed by God with a good memory, it is because I have never eaten a quince, or a sour apple, or fresh coriander, or garlic, or the remainder of a mouse's meal; nor have I, to the best of my belief, ever read a book written by the blind, nor drawn blood from the nape of my neck. For these things weaken the memory and produce folly. From the unseemly demeanour of your guide"—the rascal had been more exasperating than usual—"I would hazard the conjecture that he has tasted of many a mouse's meal."

The guide grew exceeding wrath, and would have struck the speaker had I not prevented him; then he cried, "You lie! the humiliation you would thrust on me, see, I cast it back in your face!" The seal-maker smiled good-humouredly. "Friend," said he, "the humiliation was mine, and not yours, for have I not spoken to a careless listener? Know, however, for your future guidance, that a man, if he meet with humiliation, has sometimes nobody but himself to blame. This will certainly be his sorry case if he sit down uninvited to another's table, or if he respect not his host, or if he hope for kindness from a foe or for learning from the low-born; so much the more will he suffer the inevitable consequence if he honour not his Prophet, his country, and his King. And"—here he turned to the crowd—"to listen inquisitively to another's conversation has the same effect as addressing an inattentive

audience. I would not have ye be guilty of the former, which is the extreme of discourtesy, any more than I would have the latter, which is the acme of humiliation, thrust on me a second time by the friend to whom I spoke."

I watched the guide, who could not contain his spleen. "Thou sententious ass!" he shrieked, making as if to take off his sandal wherewith to belabour the seal-maker. Once more he was met by a meek and smiling countenance. "Verily," quoth Sadik, "if one show leniency to the mean, the low, or the servant, one must expect to be imposed on. I do but light a lamp in broad daylight, or sow seed in the desert sand, which is as wasteful as eating when one's stomach is laden, or as showing consideration to one who is not deserving of it. Three things tend towards madness: the first is to walk with the blind, the second is to talk to the deaf, and the third is to sleep alone."

By this time the sun had risen high in the heavens, and the mat awnings suspended on poles were already drawn down in order to keep out the fierce rays of sunlight, so on we went till we came to the tin-makers' bazaar. There we heard a cry of "Yá Allah! yá Allah!" and, on looking round, beheld a funeral procession. The corpses, four victims of the epidemic, were being borne from the Harem to the graveyard on rough serirs, or wooden biers peculiar to Mecca. When the procession had passed by, I entered one of the shops and bought a couple of tin bottles, each of which would hold about two pints of Zem-Zem water. It is not customary to bargain over the purchasing of these articles since they are meant to contain the water of the sacred spring.

Across the way, in a shop full of musty manuscripts of questionable antiquity, I chanced on a veritable treasure. This was an exquisite copy of the Kurán in the old Kufi writing. It was plain that the bookseller had no conception

of its value, for when I asked him the price of it he said, "Give whatever you like, and I will be content to part with it. We must not attempt to make a profit out of the Word of God, though it were well that we should seek to profit by its lessons."

The Muhammadans are not supposed "to sell" the Kurán like any other book: a "hedieh," or "present" goes to defray the cost of production. I offered a "hedieh" of a Turkish pound, not so much as dreaming that the bid would be accepted; but to my intense delight the shopkeeper, having raised the Book to his lips, and from the lips to his eyes, and from the eyes to his forehead, handed it to me, saying, "This is the Word of Allah; I give it to you, earnestly begging you to pray for me when you read it!"

I certainly prayed for him five times that day out of a grateful heart, and I made a point of doing so until, just before I embarked on my homeward voyage, I looked for the precious Book only to find it gone, along with several other valuable purchases.

Soon after leaving the bookseller's, being in need of rest and refreshment, we entered a coffee-house which was literally filled with a crowd of pilgrims of every nationality in the East. Conspicuous in flowing abás with white and yellow stripes were two Sheykhs, who were sitting on stools at a low table, and with them I entered into conversation, offering them a cup of coffee each. The elder, a man of about forty-five, belonged to the tribe of Beni Súbh, while his companion, who was many years younger, owed allegiance to the tribe of Owf; consequently, both of them were members of the fighting clan of Harb Bedouins, who either live in tents about two stages from Mecca, on the road to Medina, or reside, if they are settled Arabs, in the towns of Rabegh, Safrá, and Fará. Of all the tribes of Harb none is more dreaded by the pilgrims than that of

Owf, more particularly are they feared by the caravans that travel between the two holy cities. Their power and bravery are undeniable, as was clearly proved during the Wahhábí invasion of Hejaz. Closely allied to them are the tribes of Beni Amere and Zobeid.

The young Sheykh, with whom I now struck up an acquaintance, declared that the Owf, with all their shortcomings, could teach moral lessons to the rest of the clan, and he attributed their predatory habits to the "overboiling spirit that was in them." He contradicted the report that his tribe had robbed forty Persian pilgrims of their belongings between Heddah and Mecca, and had murdered three Syrians between Medina and the Prophet's birthplace. He professed strong attachment to the person of the Sherîf, and expressed the hope that we would live to see the union of every tribe of Arabia under his sway; in fact, he was a true patriot, frank of speech, of engaging manners, and showing no signs of lawless violence.

Not less courteous was his companion. On hearing that he was a Sheykh of Beni Sobh I asked him if he would tell me something about the famous balsam of Mecca, for I had read that the amyris-tree, which exudes this fragrant juice, grows on the mountain of Jébélé-Sobh, between the towns of Rabegh and Bedre. He was good enough to comply with my request, being a connoisseur on the subject. The trees, Bishon, as he called them, have a straight stem, and grow to the height of about twelve feet. In the middle of summer incisions are made by the women in the soft bark with a special kind of knife, whereon a white juice oozes out, and this the women collect with the thumb-nails of their right hands, and put into a sheepskin or into a vessel of burnished copper. The balsam, if the incisions are made later in the season, takes on a yellowish colour, and loses a good deal of its virtue as a tonic.

The Persian pilgrims, I was told, are unwearied in their efforts to obtain the honey-like balm in its unadulterated form, but they rarely succeed unless they go to the head-quarters of Beni Sobh, for the stuff sold as balsam in the Meccan bazaars is hardly ever pure. The Arabs themselves can detect by the smell whether it is adulterated or not. Fortunately for the pilgrims there are certain other tests which are said to be infallible. The best balsam sinks in water, has a bright blue flame when alight, and, if you put a drop on your finger and set fire to it, it will burn without injuring the skin. The Persian traders mix turpentine with it, probably because the yellow balsam, even when it has not been "doctored," smells of that resinous substance, but the Arabs adulterate the white balsam with inoffensive oils of several kinds. Every morning the pilgrims who could afford to buy the precious tonic would take a drop in their tea or their coffee, and I know from experience that it has the most invigorating effect on the nervous system.

The senna of Mecca, which is exported to Persia, to Central Asia, and to Syria, is also a product of the country of the tribesmen of Beni Sobh, who may be regarded as the richest and most peaceful of the tribes of Harb, reaping as they do the produce of their rich valleys without molesting the caravans in the hope of spoil. The date-tree is cultivated by them, my friend the Sheykh being the fortunate possessor of over a thousand trees. It surprised me to hear that these palms are sold not by the grove but by the tree, and, as it sometimes happens, the dates of a single tree may belong to two or more owners. When a tree has to be fructified, the gardener, having laid bare the female spathe and shaken over it the male pollen, sings in a low voice, saying: "Please God, you will thrive and be fruitful."

CHAPTER II

THE TALISMAN-MONGER

On leaving the coffee-house (Kahvé-Kháné) we heard the voice of a muezzin calling to prayers. It was noon. "Listen," said Seyyid 'Alí, "I know the Mullá well; he has the soul of a saint and the voice of an angel." Emotional, the tears ran down 'Alí's cheeks in streams; then, drying his eyes, his whole face shone as from some sudden light within him. The scoffer was mute—silenced by the majestic melody of that far-flung summons; but it must not be supposed that any translation in English could reflect the dignity of the original Arabic, the most devotional tongue ever spoken by the lips of man:

> Mighty is the Lord! Mighty is the Lord!
> Mighty is the Lord! Mighty is the Lord!
> I bear witness, there is no god but God!
> I bear witness, there is no god but God!
> I bear witness, Muhammad is the messenger of God!
> I bear witness, Muhammad is the messenger of God!
> Come hither to prayers! Come hither to prayers!
> Come hither to salvation! Come hither to salvation!
> God is just! There is no other god than God!

The words swept over the city like a storm cloud, fraught with darkness, thunder, and lightning—symbols these of the mysteries, the threats, and the promises of the

AN EGYPTIAN GROCER.

Faith. The mere sound of the full-throated syllables, even to one who had no Arabic, would, however obscure it might be, suggest something alike threatening and revealing. It was as though some moonless desert had found a tongue to proclaim to-morrow's sunrise.

"By my life!" cried Seyyid 'Alí, "why, this human voice, acknowledging the might of the most Mighty, finds its way to the core of being. I do repent in that I did make mock of the engraver of seals. He was a righteous man, and of excellent courtesy and address. I have committed a fault. I have eaten dirt. I am the humblest of his servants. Come, yá-Moulai, let us hasten to say the Fátihah within the holy precincts of the Harem." This prayer runs:

"Praise be to God, the Lord of the Worlds, the Compassionate, the Merciful, the King of the Day of Judgment. Thee do we worship, and of Thee do we seek help. Lead us in the right way, the way of those to whom Thou hast been gracious, not of those with whom thou art angry, nor of those who go astray."

This, the opening chapter of the Kurán, is held in special veneration by the Muhammadans, by whom it is sometimes called the chapter of prayer, of thanksgiving, of treasure, and is repeated by them as often as the Christians repeat the Lord's Prayer. Not less precious is the sublime passage in the second Súra, descriptive of the Divine Majesty, and entitled Ayatu'l-Kúrsí—that is, being translated, the Verse of the Throne. It runs something like this:

"God, save whom there is no God, is the living, the self-subsisting one. Slumber overpowereth Him not, nor sleep. Unto Him belongeth whatsoever is in the heavens, and whatsoever is in the earth. Who is he that shall intercede with Him, save through His good pleasure? He

knoweth that which is past, and that which is to come unto them; and they understand not a single iota of His knowledge, except so far as He hath willed. His firmament spans the heavens and the earth, the preservation whereof doth not distress Him. And He is the most High, the most Supreme."

Having said our prayers, my guide and I, we left the Harem and returned to the bazaars. The smell of burning aloe-wood drew our eyes to a shop where combs seemed to be the only purchasable articles. These combs, made of ebony, were of two kinds. The first, used by the men, are called male combs. They are provided with a single row of teeth. The others, known as female combs, have teeth on both sides. We passed on. A man bearing a sheepskin was hawking honey, like the water of the eye for purity. It is brought down to the Meccan markets by the Arabs of the clan of Beni Salem, another branch of the tribe of Harb, who also dwell not far from Rabegh, and are more numerous than the two tribes aforementioned, whose Sheykhs we had the pleasure of meeting in the coffee-house. Among the countless hawkers thronging the thoroughfares not a single Arab milkman did we see. We met only one milkman, and he was an Indian. For milk-selling is not a popular pursuit in Arabia. Indeed, it carries with it the stigma of an ineffaceable disgrace, the term "milk-seller" having come to bear the meaning of "bastard." In like manner the Persians make use of the expression "mást-kash," sour milk carrier, on the rare occasions when they are driven to reprove a mean flatterer. The first shop we entered was that of a draper who drove a remunerative trade in winding-sheets. There we noticed the poorer side of the East. Crowds of beggars—not necessarily poverty-stricken—were practising their lucrative business. Some were weeping, many were malingering,

and one was really dead. There was no bargaining over the prices of the grave-clothes. Every purchaser chose the one he could afford to buy. While I was selecting mine Seyyid 'Alí intervened, saying, in an undertone:

"Yá-Moulai, allow me to persuade you to buy the oldest you can find, to the end that Nakír and Munkar, when you come to die (God forbid), may pass you by as having already answered their cross-examination as to your spiritual preparedness. For my own part, being in sound health—praise be to God on high!—I have no faith whatever in the existence of those Inquisitors. I am of the opinion of the Persian grandee who, having stuffed the mouth of his dead groom with grain, and having opened the grave in due course, found the grain still in the groom's mouth, and cried: 'This is proof positive that he never answered Munkar and Nakír, and strong presumptive evidence that no such Inquisitors exist!' Nay, grow not impatient with me. Am I not the least of thy slaves?"

The sceptical rogue chuckled, emitting a sound like that of a camel drinking water. The winding-sheet I bought cost about fifteen shillings. Later on I had it washed in the water of Zem-Zem. It measures about 8ft. by 4ft. In the middle the figure of a cypress tree is inscribed with the Verse of the Throne as a protection to the wearer from the Percussion of the grave; and other verses from the same chapter of Al-Beghar surround the hem thereof. For the life of me I could not help being sorry that I should not see myself in it as others would see me—a reflection which nearly stifled my guide with laughter. "Since you are still a good enough Muslim to be superstitious," said he, "I would suggest that we should next visit a talisman-monger's, for there you would find charms to protect you against the Evil Eye and the contagion of every disease." Thither, therefore, we bent our steps.

The talisman-monger, as I discerned from his features, stern and passive, and from the determination of mind underlying them, was half-Turk, half-Syrian. The Syrians are of a resolute character, and seldom take a step that does not bring them nearer to the end they keep ever in view. In this regard they are the antithesis of the Egyptians, who seem utterly aimless if left to their own devices. In their attitude towards work the Syrians are more persevering than the Persians, and less conceited in character. They are at their best as men of action. As men of thought they are inferior both to the Persians, who are the Hamlets of the East, and to the Bedouins, whose wild, imaginative spirits equip them for pillage and for poetry alike. They are extremely fond of music, these cheery sons of a flowery soil, though here, again, they must yield the palm to the fiery clansmen of the Arabian deserts. The charm-seller, a characteristic specimen of his race, an excellent business man, was taken completely by surprise when I asked him to give a name to a certain cornelian set in silver gilt and inscribed with a Kurán text. "May God protect me from Satan," he muttered in pious horror. "Here is a Muhammadan who knows not a Bábághúli!" Then, recovering slowly from his astonishment, he went on to explain that it is worn by a Muslim child in commemoration of the Aghigheh sacrifice, and I may repeat here that it forms the chief feature of the cover design to this volume.

After much bargaining I bought a Bábághúli for a couple of Turkish pounds, and found in it, beyond its usual interest, a magnificent example of Perso-Syrian work. The cornelian, which is circular in shape and slightly raised in the middle, is of a rosy shade, and measures about an inch in circumference. On it is engraved, in the finest Naskh writing, a short chapter of the Kurán, which must have cost

the artist half-a-year's labour. The stone is set in silver of a floral design, with two loops or links, through which are threaded strings of gold ending with tassels and a running noose for fastening round the arm. Round the centre stone are inlaid twenty-two rubies and emeralds, in alternate order, eleven of each. These stones alone, though they are not cut properly, are worth three times as much as I gave for the whole thing. I made haste to tie the Bábághúli round my biceps, more from fear of theft than any superstitious motive, and promised not to part with it in any circumstances; whereat my guide, sneering, said, "May the devil give you a wide berth, yá-Moulai!" the talisman-monger endorsing the wish by adding, "May it be auspicious."

The wearing of a túgh, or silver chain, to which is attached a silver bowl called kashkúl, is confined to the Shiahs. It is worn round the neck by many Persian boys, and is changed every year until the boy is nine years old. By the end of that time he has nine chains laid by. These are sent, as propitiatory offerings, to the shrine of some saint, that of Abbas in Kerbela being the most sacred. Thus it comes about that a boy, so long as he wears the túgh, is called "the dog of Abbas," and is said to be under the special protection of that saintly man. I turned to my guide. "How is it," said I, "that he is called Abbas's dog, and not 'Allah's dog,' or, more becomingly still, 'Allah's child'?"

"I will answer you in a parable," replied Seyyid 'Alí. "There was once a certain man who owned a flock of sheep. Every morning, when he drove his flock out of the fold to the pasture-land, he would say, 'O Abbas, keep watch over my sheep, which I leave in your protection;' and then he would go about his work until it was time to drive the sheep home again. One day he was too busy to

act as shepherd, and so he sent his son in his stead. The boy, having brought the sheep to the grazing ground, said within himself: 'I wonder why my father leaves the sheep in the care of Abbas. Did not Allah create them as well as him? Assuredly my father has committed a fault.' And, so thinking, he left the sheep in charge of their Creator. Now it happened that, Abbas having resigned his office, a pack of wolves passed by, and, being famished, spared not even a lamb: so that when the father went in search of the sheep, he could not find a single one. Having questioned his son, he learned the truth. 'Silly boy,' said he, 'knowest thou not that Allah takes care of all his creatures, of the wolves as well as of the sheep, whereas Abbas, listening to our entreaties, would keep the beasts of prey from attacking our flocks and herds? Be wiser to-morrow than you were this morning.' So you see, yá-Moulai, that there is no use in trying to be anything to Allah beyond what one really is."

At the end of nine years these chains are valued, and the price of them is distributed among the poor, after which they are sent to the shrine of Abbas. To the chain a pair of hands made of silver is sometimes hung, in memory of Abbas, whose hands were cut off on the plain of Kerbela. The talisman-monger had hundreds of these chains and bowls and hands in his shop, and also, among other things, heaps of mázús, or oak-apples. These oak-apples are used as charms by nearly all Muhammadans. Those in the shop were of two kinds. Some were nearly black and perfectly circular; others were of a light brown colour and spheroid in shape. Among those of a spheroidal shape was a mázú of exceptional beauty, evidently intended for a woman. The two ends of the hollow spheroid were set in silver with numerous figures exquisitely chased, one group of which was that of a female slave handing over the

heart of her young mistress to the expectant lover. This particular kind of mázú, I was told, is suspended on a chain and worn on their breasts by the women. Other oak-apples are seen hanging from the tip of children's caps on a silk band, along with prayer-bags made of green velvet and containing texts from the Holy Scriptures.

Meanwhile my guide, having struck up acquaintance with a countryman of his from Hamadan, was engaged in conversation with him. This new friend, Murshid Khan by name, was a tall swarthy fellow. He had come to buy a chip of the sacred tree talh', an acacia which has small round golden blossoms, whereof he related the following legend:

"Many centuries ago a certain peasant went to cut wood in a forest near the city of Hamadan. This he had been wont to do every winter in order to eke out his livelihood, during the cold weather, as is still the custom among the peasantry in our parts. Now, it chanced that his axe struck against a branch of a talh' which, as it happened, was in the way of the tree he was felling. To his consternation a stream of blood oozed out, followed by cries the most pitiable he had ever heard. They seemed, in their distressful anguish, to come from the heart of a mother that had lost her child. The axe fell from the peasant's hand, and he himself sank to the ground in a faint. When he recovered consciousness it was to look for the talh' . . . only to find it gone! He returned to the city as fast as his legs would carry him and there he told his story, which was spread abroad among the people. And from that day to this the wood of the talh' has been regarded as sacred. Children use it in the place of mázús, and barren women, if they hang a chip of it above their beds for the space of forty consecutive Fridays, will bear children in due course. This is so."

Here the guide, Seyyid 'Alí, interrupted the speaker, saying: "Light of my heart, thou speakest the truth. In my country, in the town of Behbehan, near Shíráz, we have a famous way of protecting our women folk against the attacks of Aal—that cursed ogress who comes to cut out the liver of every mother after the birth of her child. First we draw four lines round the walls of the house; then at each of the four corners we plant a branch of the talh' tree; and a dagger, with an onion atop, is stuck in the ground facing the door. This is the only possible way of keeping Aal out—may she be accursed!"

"Sarkár," said Murshid Khan, turning to me, "I have, with these two eyes of mine, seen things beyond belief, though I believe in them myself, and many a true believer shares the belief with me." Here he turned his face in the direction of the Harem, raised his eyes, and cried: "By the owner of this Harem, the truth of my story is this: I had a sister, by name Javáher, who became Jinni, Jinnstruck, when she was ten years old. She had been of an equal mind until one day she went into a field in Hamadan, where a servant was milking the goats. It appears that she spilt the milk by accidentally kicking over the bowl containing it, and thenceforward her mind was troubled: she was Jinni. Now we people of Hamadan accounted ourselves lucky in that there lived among us a pious Mullá 'Alí, whose extraordinary capabilities were a matter of wonder and adoration. As a Jinn-gir, or Jinn-trapper, he was unrivalled. Him, therefore, we called in that he might cast out the Jinn that had disturbed the peace of my sister's mind. When he came he brought with him his famous tás—a bowl used for ablutions—and a long white sheet. Having filled the tás, he ordered my sister to sit down beside it and to gaze into the water. Then he threw the sheet over the child and the bowl, and made

certain passes with a wand he held in his right hand. Whereupon, as we noticed to our terror, there arose a mighty stir beneath the sheet, as though a host were fighting there. On a signal from Mullá 'Alí the tumult ceased and all was in a hush. Suddenly, the good priest, calling my sister by her name, said: 'What do you see there?' And my sister replied, in a dreamy, awestruck whisper: 'O, Mullá 'Alí, I see him seated gloriously on a throne studded with precious gems, and hundreds of attendants, both men and women, are kneeling before him. It is the King of the Jinns.' 'And what do you hear? be attentive!' said the priest. 'One little Jinn,' replied my sister, in a terror-stricken voice, 'is prostrating herself before his Majesty, and this is what she says: "Javáher—may she be punished—spilled a bowl of milk a month ago, and hurt my toes, and I have been lame ever since. Though my friends have cast a spell over her, I must request your Majesty to increase her punishment, that she may learn to fear the displeasure of our King." Oh, oh, oh! How she cries and weeps before the throne of his Majesty; I am fainting.' 'Beg her humbly to forgive you, and promise to be more careful in the future, and all will be well,' cried Mullá 'Alí. It was impossible to doubt the sincerity of my sister's repentance, and when the priest removed the sheet, which he did so soon as my sister had made her appeal before the throne, behold my sister was in her right mind once more. I forgot to say that before the removal of the covering a neighbour came in, saying that he had lost a gold diamond ring, probably by theft. So the priest commanded my sister to ask the Jinn she had injured to tell her where the ring was. The Jinn in question was good enough to mention the thief by name, much to the delight of our neighbour, who subsequently recovered his property. I can assure you, Sarkár, that this

last proof of the Mullá's power made Hamadan the safest city in Persia. Theft was unknown there. May Mullá 'Alí have a long life!"

The talisman-monger was the next to speak. He said: "You must know that I am not always in Mecca. I come here for the three journeying months, then I return to Smyrna, where I have two shops of this nature in the bazaars. Next to one of my shops there is a small coffee-house, whither I go for refreshment in my leisure hours. About three years ago there came to Smyrna a man named Dervish Ibrahim, from Turkistan. Everybody except myself believed in the supernatural power of this dervish, who wore a white beard on a shining face. One evening, when I had closed my shop and was proceeding home, I found the dervish seated on the front bench of the coffee-house, surrounded by his followers. He called me by my name—Abdullah-ben-Jafar—though it had never been mentioned before him, and when I went to him he said: 'I can see from your face that you scoff at the power of talismans, though you sell them to those who are wiser than yourself, and therein show yourself possessed of some share of wisdom. It is my humour to-night to reveal to you a single drop of the ocean of omnipotence. Come, take this scrap of paper, whereon I have written a few words to the dead, carry it to the neighbouring cemetery, bury it in the sand near the entrance, and bring back to me a handful of the sand. Be careful, on returning, not to look behind you, for, if you do so, you will be torn in a million pieces that will be distributed among those that lie there. Look ahead, and your life will be safe.' Well, curiosity possessed me, and off I went. When I had buried the scrap of paper, and taken up a handful of sand, I heard thunder and the voices of the dead crying, 'Oh, Abdullah-ben-Jafar, take not the sand away, else you will be cut in bits. Stop!

Stop! Stop!' I shuddered all over my body, and lost consciousness suddenly. When I awoke it was to see the sun rising. I hurried to the dervish, and kissed his feet, and implored him to forgive me for having doubted his power to work miracles."

This story-telling had attracted a number of pilgrims, who, to the exaltation of the talisman-monger, fell to examining his curiosities with a view to business. After every purchase, Abdullah-ben-Jafar raised his hands to heaven, and cried: "Praise be to God on high! May His kindness be increased!"

CHAPTER III

SEYYID 'ALÍ'S STORY OF HIS REDEMPTION

ON leaving the talisman-monger's we went about our shopping in the Meccan bazaars, my guide pointing out to me the places of interest on the way. He grew excited when we passed a certain coffee-house, from within whose doors, as he assured me, he had escaped from himself into the bosom of the Beloved more times than he could count. "There are better ways of ascending into heaven, yá-Moulai," he exclaimed, ecstatically, "than by being buried underground!" He paused as if to give me the opportunity of begging him to explain the connection; but all I said in reply was that a Tower of Silence would scarcely suit one whose tongue was for ever on the wag.

"'Tis true," he affirmed, in no way disconcerted, "the birds of prey are not to my liking. I would discourse of the parrot of mysteries, that hath opened to me the gates of Paradise more than once. If your Excellency would acquaint himself with——" I interrupted him, saying: "Are you speaking of hashísh, my friend? If you are, let me tell you that I have no wish to renew my experience of the drug." And when I hurried on, he drew a deep breath, but whether of disappointment or of relief I couldn't make out. "In that coffee-house, yá-Moulai," he said at last, "you might have tasted of every narcotic of the drowsy East: of hashísh, the master Seyyid, or the Parrot

of Mysteries, an acquired taste; of bang, a most potent liberator of thought; and, lastly, of opium, which is, as we Persians have it, the Antidote, the healer of every ill except the one it engenders. I was once a well-seasoned vafurí (opium-smoker), and could discourse of mysteries more eloquently than any dervish. My nose would grow wet every time I smoked a pipe of hashísh and my imagination bear me on its wings to the seventh heaven, or plunge me into the lowest hell. Those were days of spiritual intoxication—yá-Allah. What cured me of drug-bibbing was the dread of remaining in the abode of the damned."

He sauntered on, telling over the beads of his rosary. "Never," he cried suddenly, "shall I forget the last pipe of hashísh I smoked." I followed him up on the scent of a story. "Come," said I, "tell me your tale, and have done with it."

"Well, it was at Shíráz; I was in the society of some twenty matured dervishes, and the year was at the spring and the sun was set. I never hear a nightingale, nor smell a rose, but I can taste that kalyan of hashísh and tobacco. Not that I was conscious at the time of any stomachic qualm. Not more than half-a-dozen whiffs were enough to speed me on my way into a world in which this mortal flesh lay shuddering at the terrible aspect of things—terrible beyond the imagination of the unenlightened to conceive. Supper was brought in. Among the dishes laid before me was a plate of piláw, dome-shaped, having on top a multitude of round pieces of meat, and these, to my exceeding terror, came tumbling down the pyramid of white rice, owing to the carelessness of the servant in handling the dish. But what did I, in my excited fancy, behold, yá-Moulai? I thought I was at the foot of a snow-clad mountain, whose crest dwarfed that of Demavend, and from the summit thereof there came hurtling down on me

huge boulders of massy rock. I cried aloud in terror, and tried to hide myself in the corner of the room. My friends, the dervishes, laid hold of me, and carried me into the compound, and flung me into the tank, and in so doing they cheated me to believe that a host of angels had rescued me from the avalanche, and, bearing me into Paradise, had cast me into the living waters of Salsabíl. For, on opening my eyes, I saw a heavenly houri, whose face shone as the face of the sun. Her feet were on the earth, but her head reached as high as the fourth heaven. How could I—a man of ordinary stature—make love to a houri whose height, even among the ladies of Paradise, must have been a swallow's flight above the average? True, I might sit in adoration at her feet, but that a taller man than I would have the pleasure of kissing her lips seemed only too likely. This thought was blasphemy in itself; and no sooner did it creep into this unregenerate mind of mine than two angels caught me by the hands and threw me into the burning furnace of hell. And this sudden change in my fortunes corresponded with the actions of my friends in taking me out of the tank and putting me to bed, and applying a hot remedy to what they believed to be a cold disease. Yá-Allah, how I burned, but without consuming, in that fire of the unredeemed. I cried for help, but Allah—may I be His sacrifice—cast me still deeper into the hell of His displeasure, saying, 'He who would worship me must worship me in soberness and sincerity! Eschew all narcotics, O Seyyid 'Alí, lest I leave thee here to perish in the flames.' Then repentance wrung my heart so that the tears started to my eyes and overflowed. And when that happened a wind from heaven blew, and I caught sight of a cloud of sun-lit hair—the hair of the divine houri who had previously overawed me—and these radiant tresses were wafted by the wind within arms'

reach of my despair. I clutched them in these two hands. The exhilaration of a swift ascent filled my soul with thanksgiving, and a shriek—like a throb of pain—darted through me from without, striking on the drum of consciousness within me. In other words, I awoke to find myself lying at home, with a handful of my wife's hair pressed to my lips in rapture. How I came to be there I never discovered, but the mother of my children explained to me with many words that the too forcible removal of the hair I held in my fingers had left a bald patch on the crown of her head. And this, yá-Moulai, is the true story of my redemption."

Meanwhile, we had reached the northern extremity of Mussah-street, where in a shop I noticed a number of small bags of yellow leather containing, as Seyyid 'Alí informed me, the celebrated henna of Wady Fatima. This valley, called after the Prophet's daughter, the wife of 'Alí, his cousin, is situated about eight hours' journey to the north-west of Mecca, on the road to Medina. The whole neighbourhood abounds in the shrub from whose pounded leaves the henna paste is produced. The act of dyeing the hair with henna is known by the name of khezab, and is so popular among the Muhammadans of both sexes that it has come to be almost a religious rite. Many a devout dyes his hands and feet and hair once a week, the paste giving to the skin an orange-reddish colour, and deepening the original shade of dark hair to a ruddy black. On the hammám day the henna is taken to the bath; the attendant forms it into a paste in small dishes used for the purpose and called jamé-henna; the decoction should be allowed to stand for half an hour before it is applied to the skin and the hair. There are special women artists who draw, on the soles of the feet and the palms of the hands, all manner of pictures with this dye. Not less than eight hours are

devoted to the practice, the victims—women, of course—lying with outstretched limbs, for the henna "to take its colour."

If one neglects to make use of the dye one runs the risk of bringing misfortune and leprosy on one's whole family. The henna of Wady Fatima, which has a perfume peculiar to itself, is considered particularly blessed. I was told by the shopkeeper—a prejudiced person, no doubt—that the Devil himself could be rendered harmless to the Muslim who should dye his hands once a week and employ an apt quotation from the Kurán, always provided he were not clad in ihrám. The assurance that he had sold one hundred thousand bags of the precious dye to the pilgrims within the month gave me a lively notion of the credulity of his customers.

Next day I had an opportunity of witnessing the funeral of one of the chief priests of Mecca, who had died of cholera. The procession, despite the panic created by the epidemic, was of considerable length. Half a dozen mullás, intoning passages of the perspicuous Book, led the way. These were followed by twelve unkempt dervishes in quaint uniforms, reciting in unison the praises of the dead priest. Then came the rough bier peculiar to Mecca on the shoulders of ten pilgrims of as many nationalities. The son, supported by two stalwart priests, and the chief mourners came next, and after them the women, about twenty in number, and a crowd of beggars, who had heard that the flesh of two camels was to be distributed among them. Every now and then, as we noticed on watching the procession pass by, the bearers would be relieved of their burden by the most eager among the bystanders, for it is a tradition that seventy thousand angels will praise the man who lends a helping hand in carrying the dead to the cemetery. A frequent cry went up of "O Lord, may his

sins be forgiven him. Praise be with Muhammad and with his people."

"Yá-Moulai," said Seyyid 'Alí, "you saw how the people lent their assistance in order to win the approval of the angels? Well, I will tell you of a clever trick performed in Mecca last year by four Sunnis who had murdered a Shiah in a lodging-house. One of the assassins was chosen by the arbitrament of the *estakhhareh* to buy the bier and to bring it to the house where the body lay. That being done, the mutilated corpse was laid inside by the four men, who, so to speak, bore the burden of their misdeed into the street. The passers-by, seeing a funeral, hastened to offer their help in carrying the corpse to its resting-place. No sooner was each one of the assassins relieved than he made good his escape, so that by the time the washing-house was reached the culprits had all disappeared. The crime was detected when the body was taken out to be washed. Suspicion fell on the bearers—half a dozen strange pilgrims who had lent a willing shoulder—and they were brought before the Kazi on the charge of murder. They only escaped death by paying a heavy sum in blood money."

We pursued our course eastward to the temporary Syrian bazaar called Sughé-Shami. Goods from all parts of Syria—from the town of Smyrna to the remotest fastness of Lebanon—were to be found there. The Syrians drove a lively trade in silk stuffs from Damascus and Aleppo, as well as in European cotton prints and in steel ware. The steel ware was sold as "Inglisi," though it was generally of German manufacture, imported into Asia Minor either direct from the Fatherland or from Constantinople. I saw "Inglisi" silk umbrellas, with what appeared to be silver handles, priced at half a mejidi, or about two shillings. German watches, guaranteed to be "Inglisi," could be bought at a cost varying from

four to ten shillings. On the other hand, Persian carpets were far more expensive there than they are in London, and so also were Turkish ones. Silk headgear called *chepi* and silk kerchiefs called *kefi* were in great request among the Bedouins, who purchased, besides, the dried fruits of Syria. There were many coffee-houses *à la turque*, where story-tellers recited in flowery language, either Arabic or Turkish, the tales of the Arabian Nights. Some pilgrims might sit listening from sunrise to sunset, but my guide and I, having drunk a cup of coffee, proceeded on our way, past the Prophet's birthplace, to the Moamil or pottery bazaar. There, as I watched the potters at work, I couldn't help quoting the immortal lines of Omar Khayyám, as translated by Fitzgerald:

> "For I remember stopping by the way
> To watch a potter thumping his wet clay;
> And with its all-obliterated Tongue
> It murmur'd—'Gently, Brother, gently, pray.'"

Thence, in the Sughé-Lail, the carpenters have their niches. My guide told me a story of a Meccan carpenter who went once to measure a doorway of one of the houses in the neighbourhood. Having forgotten his yard measure he calculated the width by opening his arms. Then, still keeping his arms in the same position, he hastened back to his shop. On the way he fell down a well; the people gathered round; and one among them threw him a rope, but the carpenter refused to catch hold of it, lest he might change the measurement of the doorway. "Ah, my friend," said I, "there I waited for you. That story is taken from 'Mullá Nasiru'-Din,' a book satirising the mock piety and the folly of the priests. You must be more careful in choosing the tales you would foist on my credulity." And so wrangling we reach the cattle market.

Now, kindness to animals is specially recommended by Muhammad, but his followers have still much to learn in practice. The sheep and cattle are driven to the market in the early morning, before sunrise, and, unless they are sold, must remain all day long without anything to eat or to drink. The condition of some of the sheep was pitiful. The camels, that are not accustomed to be for ever nibbling like the sheep, appeared to suffer less from the deprivation of food. In that quarter of the town nearly all the tradesmen, whether cattle-sellers, butchers, fruiterers, or grocers, were Bedouins, dwelling in their encampments inside the town, and holding themselves aloof from the Arab townsmen and the foreigners. In manners, customs, and morality they have suffered but little change from the time of the Prophet, for, unlike the Meccans themselves, they have borrowed none of the characteristics of their co-religionists from alien countries. They forbid their women to be on intimate terms with the townswomen; and when you meet them buying and selling in the market place they are always extremely reserved, and sometimes not less haughty in their demeanour towards you. For the frankness which is their most pleasing quality in their canvas cities is held in restraint so soon as they take up their quarters in Mecca during the pilgrimage. The women, both rich and poor, work hard, in most cases even harder than the men, and that is why they wear, in contrast to the townswomen, who are corpulent and comely, an appearance of being as muscular as they are lean and sun-baked. Near the cattle market we saw some low shops and warehouses in which corn and provisions were being sold by Indians and Egyptians to some Bedouins who had entered the town in order to replenish their supplies, and there, too, the outgoing caravans are wont to take in their eatables for the

homeward journey. Rice and wheat are the commodities which are most needed by the Bedouins of Hejaz, and in these the southern Indians carry on a brisk trade with the interior of that barren province.

CHAPTER IV

HEALING BY FAITH

TWO things play an important part in the family life of Persia. The first of these, the yearly almanac or *taghvím* is studied with a pathetic trust by all. In a day that has been marked unlucky they see the frustration of their hopes and prayers, however perseveringly they may strive, by earnest effort, to elude the working of the fateful stars and to bring about the consummation of their wishes. "The most blessed hour for prayer," I was told by one of them, "is when the planet Jupiter is in conjunction with the culminating point of the firmament." And when I began to argue with him, he said in astonishment: "Have you no faith in *estakhhareh* either?" I replied: "If you can prove to me by any passage in the Kurán that God will lend his advice to the Muslim who shall consult Him through the beads of a rosary, I will believe in the *taghvím*, the *estakhhareh*, or any *fáll* or omen you care to mention. But, first, let me be sure that I understand the method of making an *estakhhareh*. Having read a verse of the Holy Scriptures, you place the finger on a bead, then, counting the beads from that point to the nearer end of the thread, you believe that God will grant you your heart's desire provided the number be odd, but that He will refuse your request if it be even. Am I right?" "Certainly," he replied; "for if my prayer be

reasonable and I deserving in the sight of God, He will assuredly guide my hand." "It is obvious," I retorted, "that God can and does guide His slaves; but I deny that He shares your belief in the luck of odd numbers. Let the Prophet be my intercessor. This is what he says:

"'Do ye acquire knowledge, for he who acquireth knowledge in God's service performeth an act of piety; he who giveth utterance to it praiseth the Lord; he who is diligent in search of it worshipeth God; and he who imparteth it offereth sacrifice to Him.' Now, your faith is rooted not in knowledge, but in superstition. Look around you, and you will see the wonders of God in the working of laws immutably just, eternally the same. I tell you that action and reaction are equal and opposite, that the ordered weal and woe are the results of our own actions good and evil, and I advise you to put on the armour of knowledge in the desert less you fall a victim to the superstitious of whom you now are one. 'The ink of the scholar,' the Prophet tells us, 'is more holy than the blood of the martyr.'"

My opponent, however, remained unconvinced. He assured me that his spiritual director would not dream of wearing a new 'abá without first consulting the *taghvím*, nor would he take it on himself to administer a dose of medicine to a sick child without asking God, through the beads of his rosary or the pages of the Kurán, whether the remedy would be efficacious or not. Of the progress of medical science the Shi'ah pilgrims knew nothing.

Galen and Avicenna are still regarded as the leading masters of the profession, and their treatises are the only ones that are studied. Diseases are divided into hot and cold. A cold remedy is applied to a hot disease, and a hot remedy to a cold one. The doctors bleed patients suffering from malarial fever. They keep small-pox endemic by their curious remedies. Silver armlets containing texts out

A PERSIAN PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY.

of the Kurán are worn as preservatives of health. The saints and *estakhharehs* are sometimes the only doctors. "The One who sends fever takes it away . . . Khodá rahím ast (God is merciful). . . . If He wants me to remain here He will cure me. . . . He is the best doctor." Offerings in money or in sweet-meats are given to the poor for the patient's recovery. The money is placed under the pillow every night, and is distributed every morning among the needy. The patient, despite the stifling atmosphere, is persuaded to believe in a speedy recovery, everybody telling him that he will soon be quite *kushdell* or cheerful. But when the end draws near a priest is summoned in haste, and the dying man, if he has no just cause of complaint against a child or against his wife, says not a word as to the distribution of his property, having full confidence that the divine law will be religiously followed. He instructs the priest as to the rites to be observed at his funeral and the offerings to be paid for the peace of his soul. He may command his sons to obey their mother and to respect their sisters. If he has no issue he may settle his property on a school, a mosque, a saint, or a water cistern.

The corpse must not remain more than twenty-four hours in the house. The hammámí, or bath-keeper, now enters the house in the capacity of an undertaker. He places the body on a *korsi*, that is, on a raised wooden platform in the middle of the room; a copy of the Kurán and a decanter of rose-water are set down near the head; and a cashmere shawl is laid over the remains. For a month or forty days after burial a *ghari* or hired priest keeps watch over the grave, praying for the soul's peace of the newly-departed, and reading the Kurán aloud. On the night of the interment the percussion of the grave, the fesharé-ghabre, is supposed to take place. The priest must keep on reciting a certain passage of the Kurán, called Ayatu'l-Kúrsí or the Verse of

the Throne, in order to extend the space and prevent the pressure. Then come Monker and Nakír—those livid-faced angels of death—and question the deceased concerning his faith. If his answers be satisfactory, 'Alí will cause him to be refreshed by the air of Paradise; if not, he will be beaten on the temples with iron maces.

The evening before I left Mecca for Jiddah I was suffering from a racking headache, and my friends advised me to consult a certain Arab physician. The curiosity to have an interview with this leech overcame my scepticism concerning his health-giving touch, so off I went to the east of the town where he dwelt, taking my guide with me; and there, in a winding lane some three feet wide, we found his house. My guide summoned the servant by banging at the outer door with his club. In about ten minutes what we judged to be a small urchin appeared behind the door and asked us in a piping treble what we wanted. Having assured himself that we were not Bedouin Arabs bent on pillaging the sacred house, he drew back the bars, bidding us enter in the name of God the Merciful and Clement.

The courtyard through which we passed was unpaved and not more than five yards square. The apartments—six fetid cells—ranged round three sides of it. The hakím's room faced the door. We walked in with the greeting "Salám 'aleykum! Peace be unto you!" The faith-healer was seated cross-legged on a mat in a corner of the cell. He rose to receive us, saying "Bismillah! in the name of God!" the Eastern equivalent of "Please come in." He was of middle height, lean, of a pleasing countenance; his eyes were deep-set, brilliant, smiling; his beard measured the span of a man's hand; and his teeth flashed between lips framed for laughter. He wore a white handkerchief round his head, and a long blue gown reached

to his ankles. Nothing could exceed the courtesy of our host. As a mark of respect, he insisted on my taking his place; my guide, heaving a "Yá-Allah!" and a sigh of relief, sank to my side on the left; while the sunny-faced saint, squatting at my right hand, turned a beaming eye on his trusty henchboy, who was standing in the doorway, waiting for the orders of his lord and master.

In the East they never break the ice of silence with a remark on the weather. The customary opening is to inquire if you are in health. I told the doctor, in answer to his question, that I had a bad headache, and had come to him to be cured. When he had raised his hands and cried out "Yá-Muhammad!" thereby invoking the Prophet to lend him the assistance he required, it was to ask me on which side the head ached. I touched the spot, whereon he fell to rubbing it vigorously with the palm of his right hand, calling out the while to the urchin to fetch the necessary apparatus for the forthcoming operation. The boy disappeared. In a few minutes he came back, bearing in both his hands a round hollow plate of clay in which were a few lumps of burning charcoal.

The next things he brought in were a couple of round iron rods about twice the length of an ordinary pencil, together with a cup filled with a black fluid used as ink and composed, if I mistake not, of a mixture of starch and the soot of an oil lamp. The doctor thrust the rods in the glowing charcoal. The fear of being branded bathed my brow in sweat. The doctor, assuring me that I had no cause to be afraid, cried out: "If we lose heart at the sight of these little rods, how much the more shall we suffer when we feel the weight of the maces of the angels of punishment. May God protect you from the fire of hell!"

The tips of the rods by this time were red-hot. Having

dipped them in the cup of ink, he closed his eyes, and then raised his voice in an incantation that lasted several minutes. Not a single word could I understand. When it was over he opened his eyes, and, saying the word "Bismillah," proceeded to draw with one of the rods on my right temple five perpendicular lines crossed by five horizontal ones, thus forming sixteen tiny squares. The same pattern was traced on the left temple with the second rod. Several magic hieroglyphics besides were inscribed in the same manner behind my ears and on the nape of my neck.

After every operation the good doctor would pause to ask me: "Is the pain gone now?" Four times did I tell him the truth; then, fearing that he would begin to tattoo my body, I assured the persevering little man that I never felt better in my life. His joy knew no bounds. Raising his hands to heaven, he cried, "Praise be to God Almighty, who hath sent to this poor family a power so miraculous. The secret was bequeathed to my father by the Lord God, and when my father died he left it to me as an inheritance. On no account must you wash off the signs until to-morrow morning; for if you do the pain will return to punish you. The blight of the Evil Eye was the cause of your headache. Go in peace. You are welcome."

The following day I set out on my homeward journey, taking Seyyid 'Alí with me as far as Jiddah; and when I said good-bye to him I felt that I was losing an entertaining companion. That the reader may experience the same feeling of loss in parting from me is my dearest hope on bidding him farewell.

AN ARAB SHEYKH OF THE TOWN.

APPENDIX

By WILFRID SPARROY

SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE EXISTENCE OF A SLAVE MARKET IN MECCA

I brought the notes of "Hájí Ráz" to a conclusion in the last chapter; and he himself has bidden the reader farewell. It now remains for me to say a few words on what I conceive to be the greatest weakness in the Mussulman faith as interpreted by the Mullahs; and in so doing I wish it to be understood, particularly by my Eastern readers, that I am solely responsible for the opinions I am about to express on the subject of the Mussulman's attitude to slavery, the existence of which, in the fourteenth century of the Hegira, must be a source of some misgiving on the part of those who sympathise with so much in the Muslim creed. And I appeal throughout to the enlightened laymen of our Indian Empire, on whose interpretations of the Prophet's message the welfare of Islám will, in the future, depend in an ever-increasing degree.

Now, the British are the champions of freedom: under their flag every man is born free. Nothing is more hateful, to their way of thinking, than that one human being should be the slave of another. In their opinion the quality of slavery is to brutalise both the slave and his master—the slave by depriving him of the self-respect which is the heritage of every man who is free to choose his own career and to rule,

within the limits of humanity, his own destiny; and the master, by making him the owner of a human soul—a responsibility so awful that it is far more likely to lower him to the level of a beast than it is to raise him to the height of a god. If this, in brief, be a fair statement of the British attitude towards slavery, it will be interesting and, in a measure, enlightening to the reader to follow, by way of contrast, the argument supported by the ordinary Mussulman.

To be frank, the present-day followers of the Prophet —those who have not been brought under the influence of European civilisation—have far less sympathy with the opinions expressed in the opening paragraph, than had Muhammad himself. Humanly speaking, the British crusade against slavery is not only beyond their comprehension —it is also above it. Their outlook on life, with its rights, its limitations, and its responsibilities, differs fundamentally from that of the followers of the Founder of Christianity. The Christian, who speaks of himself as "a child of God and an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven," believes, if we misinterpret him not, that the first step is with him, and the road with God. In other words, he holds the inspiriting belief, which is, indeed, the source of all his worldly progress and his prosperity, that God has given him the right to act of his own initiative, but not the power—or only a circumscribed power—to foresee whither his actions will lead him. Therefore, in calling himself "a child of God," he has chosen the title that would best express his independence and his limitations. The Muhammadan, on the other hand, cannot admit that he has the power to move of his own free will, much less the right to do so. He holds that every true Muslim is, and must be, "the slave of God," the theory of free-will being to the Muslim trend of thought so antagonistic that it has come to bear much the same meaning as lawlessness. Hence his aversion from Europe and all its ways. "How,"

he asks, "can morality and law flourish in a continent, in which thought is free, in which women are free, in which God's will is superseded by the will of man? Freedom? I say we are all the slaves of God, even when we are the slaves of other men. There is not one creature who is free to act. Only the Creator is free. It is our predestined lot to be submissive to His will."

I hope the reader is following the thread of my argument. It is the feeling of the East which I would attempt to lay bare. The existence of slavery in these days is the natural outcome of that feeling. Many a child is kept illiterate for no other reason than because its father is illiterate. If the father is a pea-parcher or a bean-roaster, the son must be a pea-parcher or a bean-roaster; for a son is nothing more than a child of its father. This thraldom, to a lad of originality and spirit, is unbearable, but he must either endure it, or else run the risk of being an outcast. Thus the son is the slave of his father. In his turn the father is under the bondage of his spiritual director, who too often serves no other God than Mammon. The tendency of the Muslim, however, is to accept the guidance of his "master" with unquestioning humility. All might go well with him if his "master"—we mean his priest—were always a man to be trusted, and the right man to lead. Unfortunately the Muslim priest more often than not is more unenlightened, more selfish, more avaricious, more unscrupulous than most of his flock, and thus there is a danger of his enslaving the whole fold. Poor sheep, they, believing him to be the shepherd of God, are accustomed to follow him whithersoever he may ensnare them. They are doomed to perish together on the rock of Predestination, unless these "masters" can be brought to revise the interpretation they have put on their Prophet's teaching. Muhammad, as a matter of fact, was careful not to draw a too narrow line be-

tween the scope and the limitations of the human will. There is nothing in his message which need deter a progressive Muslim from accepting the belief that the first step is with him always, and there is no doubt that the acceptance of such a belief by the whole Muslim world would go far to breathe new life into the body politic. For it would give to the imagination an ever-widening vision of human responsibility, of human knowledge, and of human destiny. It would emancipate every race that is proud to pay allegiance to the Prophet, and would make slavery, in its widest as well as in its literal sense, a curse of the unredeemed past.

"We know," says Mr. J. H. Shorthouse, speaking in the words of an oracular voice, addressing the King of Diamonds in a pack of cards, "that we possess a power by which the fall of the cards is systematised and controlled. To a higher intelligence than ours, doubtless, combinations which seem to us inscrutable are as easily analysed and controlled. In proportion as intellect advances we know this to be the case, and these two would seem to run side by side into the infinite—law, and intellect, which perceives law, until we arrive at the insoluble problem whether law is the result of intellect or intellect of law."

Now, the Mussulman, in trying to solve this problem, seems to me to have chosen the solution which is more likely than not to paralyse the intellect and clog the wheels of progress. For if he is oppressed or poor or ignorant or unhappy, he may say it is God's will that he should be so; and thus he may remain stationary, making no effort to keep abreast with the march of civilisation. In other words, he may come to be a slave to his god. And so, to make an end of this preamble, it is not surprising that in countries where most men are to some extent slaves, socially and politically speaking, there should be men and

women who belong, as purchasable and saleable chattels, to such families as can afford to buy them. But—and this is an all-important point—the Prophet wrought his manly utmost to mitigate the ill-effects of slavery: it flourished exceedingly, as every schoolboy knows, long before his time, and in other countries besides his own; but, thanks to Muhammad's laws, the lot of the slaves of Islám was, and is still, immensely happier than was ever that of the slaves of pagan Rome or of Christian North America. It is related that Abdullah Ansari went one day to visit the Prophet, and received from him the following instructions; "On this the last Friday of Ramazán, you must devote yourself 'to taking leave' of the month, and to redeeming as many slaves as you can: and these things you must do in order that God may be gracious unto you." The "leave-taking," be it known to the reader, is practised every year, but the old custom of setting one's slaves free on the last day of the congregation of the Muslim Lent has completely died out. However, though it was not possible for Muhammad to abolish slavery in a lifetime, the system being far too deeply rooted in the customs of the country, he fully realised the oppression to which the slaves had been subjected, and left nothing undone which would ameliorate their fate.

Thus, in Súra xxiv. of the Kurán, entitled "Light," it is written: "And unto such of your slaves as desire a written instrument allowing them to redeem themselves on the payment of a certain sum, write one, if ye know good in them: that is, if ye have found them faithful, and have reason to believe they will fulfil their engagement; and give them likewise of the riches of God which He hath given you, either by bestowing on them of your own substance or by abating them a part of their ransom." Some commentators believe the last admonition to be addressed

not only to the masters but to Muslims in general, making it an obligation on them all to assist those who have obtained their liberty and paid their ransom, either by giving the ransomed slaves of their own stock, or by admitting them to have a share in the public alms. One of the Imáms, as we read in a Shi'ah book of traditions, put a very generous interpretation on the Prophet's words; for on the approach of the Hájj Day he would buy as many slaves as he could afford to set free—a signal and heartening proof that Muhammad had not preached in vain. But, alas! in these modern days a slave is rarely allowed to buy his freedom—unless, indeed, he be utterly worthless as a servant—until such time as his master is dead. A good Muslim either releases his slaves on his death-bed, having no further use of their services, or makes provision for their redemption in his will. The money and the belongings which they may have amassed, as well as they themselves, are during his lifetime his inalienable property, and, therefore, on the first day of the moon of Shavvál he must, on paying his Zikkát (that is, one-tenth of his gross estate), include therein the purchase-price of his slaves and the value of their hoards.

Another instance of the Prophet's solicitude for the best welfare of the slaves must not be omitted here. In his reverence for virtue he took such steps as would, to a certain extent, guard the female slaves from the indelicacy of their masters. If the masters have deteriorated morally, less than one might expect from the burden of their responsibility and the force of their temptation, dealing as far as in them lies with kindness by their slaves, what can be said in respect of morality of the unfortunate slaves themselves? In a play modelled on the European drama, an Oriental writer has chosen for his hero a Negro slave by name Pistachio, to whom he attributes

the lowest traits of ignorance and cunning. Pistachio is the evil genius of the family. He turns the house into a secret gambling hell. He brings about a *liaison* between his master's daughter and a suitor rejected by her parents; and, by winning his mistress's favour, excites the apprehension and jealousy of her husband. Every act of treachery is committed under the cloak of folly. His perversity has no limit, and his ingratitude no end. Making every allowance for reasonable exaggeration, we have in Pistachio a type of what an Oriental slave too often is. For there is no manner of doubt that a man, born and bred in slavery, knowing next to nothing of the refining influence of education, is more apt to represent rather the worse, than the better, side of human character. Some slaves there are, doubtless, who, like Arab horses, are surpassingly faithful to their masters, but there are others—perhaps more numerous—who, in the effrontery of deceit and moral degradation could hardly be matched by the most thankless rascal in the sink of hypocrisy. Of the majority connecting the extreme types whose portraits I have sketched, two things may be said with almost unquestionable certainty. They are self-willed and effeminate when young, and indolent and self-willed when old. In their youth, provided they be good-looking, they are regarded with suspicion by their masters, if they are male, and with jealousy by their mistresses if they are female. They live, whether they be men or women, in the strength-sapping seclusion of the harems, and hence, for one reason, their lack of such qualities as go to the making of healthy manhood. For intellect they must be placed not much above the level of the dog—in fact, if the dog could speak, he would put in his claim to the higher rank.

I have hardly heard of a single slave in an Oriental house who deserves to be noted for his intellectual power.

Since he is so cunning and can set the whole family by the ears, how comes it that he is so dull of understanding? Does the cause lie solely in the neglect of education? Surely not, for if it did his master's case would often be no better than his own. Is the reason, then, to be sought beneath the surface of his skin? Scarcely, I think, since, under the British flag in South Africa, his brother blacks are gaining fast in intellectual strength. No; set your slave free; let him have a body he can call his own. Educate him that he may develop a mind to rule himself. Give him light, and room, and liberty. Do this, you master of Islám's slave, and your jesters shall have no cause in the future to satirise the wretched victim who, bought in chains and reared in sloth, is nothing less than a living stigma cast on your manhood. If anything could emancipate your sense of justice, it would be a visit to the Slave Market of Mecca. Go there, see for yourself the condition of the human chattels you purchase. You will find them, thanks to the vigilance of the British cruisers, less numerous, and consequently more expensive, than they were in former years; but there they are, flung pell-mell in the open square—in crowds that clamour for a recrudescence of Muhammad's attitude towards slavery.

One group, that of a mother and daughter, excited the sympathy of many pilgrims. The girl, unthinking, giddy, broke every now and then into shrill laughter. In her mirth, more terrible to witness than grief, it seemed as though she would while away the hours of exciting expectation. For the girl was bent on winning a master; slavery had for her no terror, a mother no reclaiming tie. Every time the daughter laughed her mother's face twitched all over, and then grew rigid. It was plain, to the sympathetic eye, that she had forced herself to rejoice in her own anguish —her daughter's unconcern, telling herself, it may be, that,

though her own pain would soon be the greater, her daughter's would be so much the less. The one, dreading the parting, disguised her secret anguish, or found her consolation in her child's heartlessness; the other, who could not conceal her anxiety lest she should be overlooked, was innocent of a qualm. The dealer, standing by, cried out: "Come and buy, the first fruits of the season, delicate, fresh, and green; come and buy, strong and useful, faithful and honest. Come and buy." The day of sacrifice was past, and the richer pilgrims in their brightest robes gathered round. One among them singled out the girl. They entered a booth together. The mother was left behind. One word she uttered, or was it a moan of inarticulate grief? Soon after, the girl came back. And the dealer, when the bargaining was over, said to the purchaser: "I sell to you this property of mine, the female slave Narcissus, for the sum of £40." "And I," replied the pilgrim, "agree to pay you £40 for your property, Narcissus." Thus the bargain was clinched. This time the mother's despair was voiceless; for it meant to stay with her always.

Most of the slaves, male and female, came from Nubia and from Abyssinia, and these are said to be the most faithful. "Hájí Ráz" tried his best to determine the extent of the traffic at Mecca, but in a country where the census is unknown, where every nobleman is an independent ruler, and where the revenue cannot be calculated with any degree of accuracy, he found it impossible to form even a working hypothesis as to the number of human beings that are sold yearly in the city of God. That the trade by sea is on the decrease is certain; but many a slaver escapes from the clutch of the British cruisers owing to the shallow waters of the Red Sea and to the fact that the pursuer cannot go ashore. Moreover, the overland route is always open. Thus he was told that the generality of the richer

pilgrims commemorated the sacramental journey by buying at least one slave, and often two. The price varied. A woman-slave, if she were good to behold, fetched by far the higher price—from £20 to £80. Men slaves could be bought for sums varying from £15 to £40. The children-in-arms were sold with their mothers, an act of mercy; but those that could feed themselves had to take their chance. More often than not they were separated from their mothers, which gave rise to scenes which many a sympathetic pilgrim would willingly forget if he could.

It is the custom among the Muhammadans to change the names of their newly-acquired property. Thus the slaves that go to Persia and to Central Asia are called by the names of the flowers if they are women, and by those of the precious stones if they are men. Of the precious stones Turquoise and Cornelian are the most common. Flowers and precious stones! Are they not men and women, O children of Islám, and if they are, why do you not restore to them, in accordance with the express commands of Muhammad, the Prophet, the breath that would reanimate and the light that would redeem them? . . . "But zeal outruns discretion. Here I end."

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